THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 17 June, 1935 Number 6

WAR PREPAREDNESS AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

—R. P. D.

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LABOUR MONTHLY

LANCASHIRE

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AGAINST

WAR AND FASCISM

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Further details will be announced next month, but readers are urged to send immediately the names and addresses of all organisations in the Lancashire area they consider should be invited to be represented, so that invitations can be sent out at once. Write to The MANAGER, THE LABOUR MONTHLY, 7 JOHN STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

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A Magazine of International Labour

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The Labour Monthly Appeals to You

THIS month, largely owing to the splendid donation of a supporter who desires to remain anonymous, the total of the Debt Fund reaches £60 2s. 9d. At the same time the quite considerable list of other donations shows that a whole number of other readers are giving all they can.

Writing on behalf of some Y.C.L. students in the University of British Columbia, a reader while hoping to send a further contribution later, tells how

> From one copy of the LABOUR MONTHLY we have increased our purchases to four, which is not so bad for a very strongly middle-class University . . . the copies get passed round and a considerable number of people are thus reached.

Other encouraging letters reach us from New Zealand, one enclosing a donation and another promising one later. The latter writes saying that :

> I look upon the LABOUR MONTHLY as *the* sheet anchor in these times of threatening economic changes and the writings of Mr. R. Palme Dutt constitute a signpost of coming events.

These letters with many more previously quoted from show that readers all over the world value the LABOUR MONTHLY sufficiently to do all they can to keep it in being.

There must be many more who wish to help but have so far not been able for one reason or other to send in their contribution. To those in Britain who hesitate having to buy postal orders we would point out that stamps are equally welcome either loose or in book form—there is a good range of the latter to suit several kinds of pockets at 2s., 3s. or 5s. Then others can devise some method of collection, however small the result may seem by itself—there are two such examples this month in the list of acknowledgments, one from a reader who collected or set aside all halfpennies, the other from a reader who sold home-made marmalade and gave of the proceeds. Many of you no doubt can discover numerous other ways of collecting.

The LABOUR MONTHLY draws the attention of readers to the form they can fill up overleaf, and especially appeals this month for new guarantors, not only to take the place of those who for one reason or another are having to cease this guarantee, but also to build up the Fund towards the objective of £28 a month, the total which will assure the MONTHLY's future.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

War Manœuvres — Labour Monthly Conference — Sharpening Issues—London Trades Council Anti-War Conference— A Memorandum of War Preparation—Labour Peers and Hitler—Second International and Labour Party— British-Nazi Relations—Basic Collaboration— Conflicting Forces—Propaganda Manœuvres —A Warning—The Main War Danger— Mass Struggle and the Franco-Soviet Pact — Stalin's Declaration — Locarno and Franco-Soviet Pact—Labour and War-Coalition.

BEHIND the present diplomatic manœuvres the foundations of the future war are being laid. Once again it is necessary this month to return to these issues of world politics and war preparations, of alliances and strategic moves, and to delay for the moment comment on the important new developments of the political situation in Britain. Never was it more necessary to follow with the closest attention and suspicion every step, every phrase, every move of the imperialist statesmen and strategists, and to understand with absolute clearness the line of our fight, of the fight of the international working class and the Soviet Union, in the present complex situation. A host of confusions are being let loose by the imperialists and by the Labour Party leaders to distort and disorganise the anti-war sentiments of the masses and turn them into the channels of support of the future war. At the same time as British Imperialism is supporting and financing and arming Hitler, the mass-hatred of Hitler is being exploited to drive forward British armaments under the excuse of the Nazi menace, and the real anti-Soviet war-plans are quietly concealed from view. We need with all our power to expose the British-German war plans, to expose the close collaboration of these two leaderships of world reaction, and to awaken the mass of the

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workers to the real character of the struggle against these war plans, for the prevention of the impending war.

THE measure of the response to the second LABOUR MONTHLY Conference for the United Front against War and Fascism on May 11 (reported elsewhere in this issue), held four months after the first Conference in January, revealed the rising sense of the urgency of the war danger. This was reflected in the rise in representation above the already widely representative character of the first conference; 311 delegates were appointed from 172 working-class organisations in the London area, as against 257 delegates from 150 organisations in January. It is noticeable that this rise was most marked in the trade union and co-operative sections ; there were 114 delegates from 61 trade union organisations, as against 66 from 36 in January, and 69 delegates from 44 co-operative organisations as against 42 from 28 in January. A similar rise would have undoubtedly been shown from the local Labour Parties, which are keenly conscious of the war danger, had not very strong reactionary influences been brought to bear to hinder such representation. The sense of urgency was also expressed in the character of the discussion, which reached a high level ; as one Labour Councillor remarked : " I have been to two previous anti-war conferences, and I believe that this conference represents a very great advance on both of them, because I believe that we have shown far more unity of purpose than we have ever shown before ; I believe that this is because we are realising that the war situation is very imminent."

NEVERTHELESS it is necessary to utter a warning note on the basis of the discussions at this Conference, taken as a cross-section of the outlook of the militant working-class elements at the present point in relation to the war issue. At the outset the Chairman correctly gave the lead for the need of absolute clearness and preparedness of the working-class movement in relation to the issues of future war :

> We would have liked in view of the present situation to see the T.U.C. summon the special conference which it promised it would summon if the war danger suddenly became a real one. We think

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> it has become a real one, and the trade union and working-class movement of this country should know quite definitely and clearly exactly what it intends to do in the event of the danger emerging definitely on our doorstep. We shall find ourselves otherwise in the same position as we were in 1914, without any clear plan or decisions, without any knowledge of what we ought to do or what we intend to do.

This lead found a strong response. But it was noticeable that in the declarations of several leading speakers a note of uncertainty crept in, not uncertainty of the will to fight war, but uncertainty of the path, a sense of confusion before the complication of the issues, and even a frank confession of inability to give a definite answer to many of the questions raised. "I must confess that at this stage I am incapable of giving a line." This from the opening speaker. "That is not an easy question, and quite frankly I am not able to give you the answer." This from the opener of the discussion. This frankness is no doubt meritorious as an evidence of sincerity, and at any rate better and more serious than the old bluff of empty promises. But it is not good enough, and it will not do. The note is a new one in left-wing working-class discussion, and most dangerous at the very moment when the concrete issues of the future war situation are beginning to show themselves more exactly. We have got to give plain answers to every question ; *the slightest uncertainty and hesitation at the present moment is the very sign of the irruption of war demoralisation into our ranks.* Certainly it is no use to repeat generalities ; it is necessary to handle the concrete situation as it exists, the Nazi rearmament and expansionist plans, the British rôle, the rôle of the League of Nations, the Franco-Soviet Pact, etc., and to show at every stage the revolutionary working-class line in relation to this concrete situation. But this is precisely the task of political leadership, without which the anti-war struggle would inevitably collapse into helpless sentiment. If the lead to the struggle is not sounded with absolute clearness and certainty from the militant elements, as represented at this conference, what hopes can there be of preparedness of the main body of the working class ?

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TURN, for the counterpart of this picture, to the special anti-war conference called under the auspices of the London Trades Council. The decision to call this special conference was carried by the fight of the militant anti-war elements at the April meeting of the Council, alongside the decision, also carried against the official elements, to oppose the exploiters' jubilee. But the Executive of the London Trades Council has actually prepared a memorandum for this conference, under the title of "The War Menace," which expresses the full governmental war policy and *coolly seeks to exploit this anti-war conference in order to whip up war preparations*. This memorandum is significant for the present stage of official Labour policy. It not only repeats the deadly Southport-Weymouth line of full support of imperialist war in the name of the "collective peace system"—therefore necessarily involving full support of imperialist armaments and war preparations—but it carries this line a whole stage further in response to the latest requirements and policy of British Imperialism. It is of the utmost importance for the militant elements to note this further development of the pro-imperialist line; for it is here that the real war attack is developing, and it is on this ground that the militant elements must be ready to fight.

FIRST, in the name of its fictitious "collective peace system" the memorandum turns its guns on the only move at present in the diplomatic sphere towards an organised front against the war menace, the Franco-Soviet Pact.

> The question at issue is whether we are progressing towards a collective peace system under the League of Nations or whether we are tending towards the alignment of certain nations into pacts likely to precipitate war and eventually destroy the League of Nations itself.

The writer does not dare to say his thought openly; he does not name the certain nations "whom he accuses of forming pacts likely to precipitate war"; for to name openly the Soviet Union for attack would be to arouse the anger of all the delegates and to subject the charge to devastating answer in the light of the real facts. But the intention of the reference is obvious; the line is the same pro-Hitler line as has continued ceaselessly

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through the British Labour press and has even aroused the indignant protest of the other parties of the Second International, including of German Social Democracy. Parallel with this echo of the policy of British Imperialism goes the demand—at the very same time as the National Government is pressing forward intensified war preparations for the civilian population—for intensified war preparations for the civilian population: By an amazing coincidence the same thought has struck the British war chiefs and the Labour chiefs; only the policy of the war staffs is boldly presented as if it were Labour's demands. Under the heading "Defensive Measures," this Labour Memorandum puts forward the following "demands" for "practical measures . . . . to safeguard the population of this country in case of war":

> A. The conservation of adequate food supplies to safeguard the population from starvation in the event of a prolonged war.
>
> B. Training of the civil population in methods of life preservation in case of air and poison gas attacks.

A curious way of pursuing the working class fight against war, but the logical sequel of Southport. It is to be hoped that the London Trades Council Conference will express its unhesitating rejection of this amazing memorandum.

TURN to still higher spheres, the expression of the Labour Lords on the war question. In the House of Lords debate on May 15 on the necessity of intensified war preparations, the declaration on behalf of the Labour Party was made by Lord Strabolgi:

> The Labour Party's attitude was that so long as we had armed forces they must be as effective as they could be made.

In the grand pro-Hitler debate in the House of Lords on May 7, when every peer of the realm appeared to have returned from a recent visit to Hitler and to be anxious to perform his service of propaganda on his behalf, the Labour Lord Noel-Buxton added also his mite on behalf of Hitler's rôle as the champion against Communism and "very pro-English":

> The German fear of Communism was a factor which, unless they had been to Germany, they were too apt to ignore. He was very impressed by the absolute sincerity of Herr Hitler in what he said to

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> him on the subject. Herr Hitler's sincerity was very much discussed in these days, but he was quite sure that on that point his sincerity was intense, and there went with it a feeling that Germany had done a service to the West of Europe in arresting Communism, and a feeling that Russia was a tremendous menace both to Germany and to those whom the Germans thought they were protecting further to the West. We must recognise that it was good fortune that Herr Hitler was—he thought it was certain—very pro-English.

Thus the Labour spokesmen express themselves, when removed from popular audiences, in the select privacy of the Lords, and after the stimulus of a visit to Hitler, by whom they are " very impressed " by the fervour of his advocacy of the fight against Communism throughout Europe and especially against the " tremendous menace " of " Russia." To complete the picture, let us descend to the lower levels of the House of Commons, and note that in the main foreign affairs debate of May 3, when Simon put into the forefront his appeal to Germany (" Will not Germany now come forward ? " " The proposal put forward by Herr Hitler ought not to be allowed to drop," etc.), the leader of the Labour Party, Lansbury, went out of his way to proclaim the united front of the Labour Party and the National Government in foreign policy and to " congratulate the Government " precisely on the issue of its relations to Hitler :

> He was glad and congratulated the Government on the fact that they had left the door wide open for Germany to come in.

OVER previous issues we have had occasion to emphasise and illustrate stage by stage the pro-Hitler and anti-Soviet line in foreign policy of official British Labour expression, most glaringly demonstrated in the identity (often to an almost verbal identity in the comment day by day) of the *Times* and *Daily Herald* in this campaign. Lest this might be thought a hostile exaggeration, let us take the testimony of an authority who can hardly be regarded as an enemy—German Social Democracy, the ally of the Labour Party. The German Social Democratic leader, Hilferding, writes in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialismus :*

> The Labour Party bears a great responsibility for the development of events in Europe. The *Daily Herald* has constantly stirred up

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> anti-French feeling and accepted the peace asseverations of Hitler at their face value. The Labour Party prevented the British Government from adopting a firm attitude. It was easily able to do this, as there exist no unity in the MacDonald Government itself on the question of foreign policy. The attitude of the Labour Party has even rendered impossible the foreign policy of the Labour and Socialist International. The Labour and Socialist International, which after the defeat of the German Social Democratic Party, can base its foreign policy mainly on the unity of the French and British parties, was completely paralysed as a result of the policy of the British Labour Party.

Thus in the view of the leading elements of the Second International, for whom Hilferding speaks, the Labour Party is the main driving force in the pro-Hitler campaign of the British Government.

THE key question of the present international situation remains the relations of British Imperialism and Nazi Germany. But this question is not a simple one ; it is complex ; and just this complexity gives rise to the dangers of confusion. In actual hard fact British Imperialism has supported and is still supporting the arming of Germany by every means—financially, economically, technically and diplomatically. The recent revelations of the *Financial News* article (May 15) on " Finance of Germany's Rearmament " has further illustrated this process. Behind the vast armaments programme of Hitler stands the Reichsbank, and behind the Reichsbank stands the Bank of England. By its credit policy, writes the *Financial News*, " the Bank of England has unwittingly (?) contributed towards the process of German rearmament." The Bank of England is not so " unwitting." The policy is the policy of the governing forces of British finance-capital. The same policy was shown in Runciman's answer over the export of British aeroplane engines to Germany (May 2) :

> Question : In view of the illegal arming of Germany, will the Government take steps to prevent the export of any more of these aeroplane engines, and are they aware of the great feeling growing up against this treasonable traffic ?
>
> Answer : We have no reason to suppose that engines exported for civil aeroplanes are not fit and proper subject for export.

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Question (from a Conservative M.P.) : Are any of these engines used for military aircraft ?

Answer : It is impossible for us to say.

Question : Will the President of the Board of Trade take steps to stop the further export of these machines ?

Answer : No.

This is the same policy as was expressed in the answers of the Chairman of Vickers with regard to the rôle of his firm in the arming of Germany, that " nothing is being done without complete sanction and approval of our own Government."

THIS policy of actively assisting the arming of Germany (at the same time as the menace of German armaments is held up in propaganda as making necessary the increase of British armaments), is not a contradiction to the diplomatic policy, but its fulfilment. It is not a question here, as is sometimes falsely presented, of private armament manufacturers seeking to make a profit by activities running contrary to the Government's policy ; on the contrary, it is one and the same policy of British Imperialism as a whole which is here expressed. It is the same policy as is expressed in the *Times*' declaration on May 3 :

> Germany simply must be given a position appropriate to a nation which is normally the most powerful single state in Europe.

It is the same policy which in the diplomatic field has consistently assisted and sanctioned each new step of German rearmament, which underlay the Simon visit to Berlin, which has assisted Germany to torpedo the Eastern Pact of Guarantee and substitute a vague non-aggression pact without guarantee, which, while insisting on the firmest precautions against any Western expansion of Germany, has repeatedly made clear that Britain has no concern or commitment with regard to what happens in Eastern Europe. The ultimate line of direction of this policy is obvious.

AT the same time the degree of German rearmament, its potentialities for offence in all directions, and the possibility of German expansion in directions not

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intended by British policy, already give cause for alarm in British ruling circles. Thus there is continuous anxiety and vigilance in regard to Germany, frequent warnings to Germany, occasional demonstrations of Anglo-French-Italian solidarity in relation to Germany, all directed to ensure that German expansion shall not take place in undesirable directions, towards the West, towards Austria and the Balkans, in the naval sphere beyond what is necessary for the domination of the Baltic, or in the colonial sphere. All this is once again no contradiction to the basic British-Nazi collaboration, but is on the contrary equivalent to *directly forcing German expansion towards Eastern Europe*. But this "fear" of the "menace of German armaments" is enormously exaggerated in propaganda for purposes of home consumption (often by the very same spokesmen, *e.g.*, Rothermere, who are simultaneously advocating an Anglo-German alliance and German war on the Soviet Union), not because there is any illusion that Germany has the least intention in the near future of directing its armaments against Britain, but because this provides the most favourable propaganda basis for pressing forward the increase of British armaments.

IN this respect a glaring and cynical manœuvre is being conducted for the purpose of concealing the real war plans and the meaning behind the present intensified war preparations. The measure of success of this manœuvre is the measure of confusion it has succeeded in creating within the ranks of the working-class movement and in the wide body of the population, at once opposed to war and fully hostile to Hitler. When the British Government issued its Armaments Memorandum of March 4, blaming German rearmament (which the British Government was helping to put through) as responsible for the necessity of British increased armaments, we had occasion to call attention to and warn against this manœuvre, which was being naïvely criticised at the time by Liberal-Labour critics as a "diplomatic blunder" for giving offence to Germany (see April "Notes," p. 217). To-day this manœuvre has reached gigantic proportions. The belief is being sedulously instilled that the British ruling class is mainly preoccupied

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with looking on Hitler as the destined future enemy, instead of as their ally ; and a remoter possible future conflict is thus being used to hide the sharp realities of the present international situation.

THE purposes of this manœuvre are obvious. On the one hand Britain busily assists to arm Germany. On the other hand, Britain points to German rearmament as making necessary its own rearmament, and proceeds to calculate noisily aloud in the familiar terms of a future Anglo-German war. What follows ? First, the real mass hatred of Hitler and recognition of the necessity to fight him with arms is exploited by the imperialists to win support for a big armaments programme, which in fact, when completed, is intended to be used in alliance with Hitler against the workers and against the Soviet Union. Second, the reformists and pacifists are at once trapped, in automatic reaction to the jingo campaign which points to Hitler as the potential enemy, into becoming apologists for Hitler, anxiously pleading for " justice for Hitler," " be fair to Hitler," " don't fight Hitler," etc., and thus actually becoming the main campaigners for the real British policy of the Hitler alliance. The Labour chiefs fulfil this rôle consciously, but many in the movement fall into the trap unconsciously. Finally, a perfect smokescreen is thus created for the real anti-Soviet plans to go forward quietly, while attention is occupied elsewhere.

CERTAINLY the possibility always exists of British-German relations sharpening. Even at the same time as the British imperialists are backing Nazi Germany, they are afraid of it double-crossing them. It is a gangster alliance, and there is no honour between gangsters. But the main dominant fact of the present situation is the alliance, not the possibility of the rupture. The main dominant fact of the present international situation, which it is necessary to expose and bring to the awareness of all, is the criminal collaboration of British Imperialism with Nazi Germany in forcing up armaments, protecting Fascism and hastening the advance to

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war. Herein lies the immediate ground of fight of the working-class movement against the National Government's foreign policy, and not in senseless pleas for greater friendship with Hitler, or equally senseless speculations as to the possibility of the National Government fighting on the side of the Soviet Union. Nazi Germany is the main centre of the war danger in Europe and the world to-day ; but without British support it would never have reached its present position ; and the suspicion that British support is behind the Nazi expansionist plans in Eastern Europe is the decisive factor underlying the menace of the present position in Europe. Against this menace the only break in the imperialist front at the present moment, which hinders the launching of the attack, is the Franco-Soviet Pact ; and the Franco-Soviet Pact thus reflects the direct interest of the international working class.

BUT British influence is using all its resources to draw France into the Western imperialist front away from the line of the Franco-Soviet Pact. And strong forces in France are working in the same direction. French Fascism is openly pro-Hitler, even at the expense of French national interests. As the old Field-Marshal Lyautey declared already in 1931 : " I feel more hatred towards certain Frenchmen—the revolutionaries—than towards the Germans of my own class." Or as Louis Bertrand, member of the Academy, more recently wrote : " I feel closer to Hitler and to his men, infinitely closer, than to the Communists who dishonour the name of Frenchmen." Laval also is not far from this line, even though circumstances have so far compelled him to carry out a different policy ; his recent meeting with Goering and projected meeting with Hitler show the direction in which he is working. *Only the strength of the mass struggle and of the united front in France, which has so far defeated the Fascist offensive with its pro-Hitler policy, has made possible the Franco-Soviet Pact.*

JUST this fact, incidentally, blows sky-high the barefaced attempts of Social Democracy to utilise as a weapon in the interests of imperialism against French Communism the

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recent declaration of Stalin in the Franco-Soviet communiqué on the armed obligations of France under the pact. In an inter-governmental communiqué between France and the Soviet Union as states there can be no question of an analysis of classes and internal relations ; the only declaration can be a bare declaration of the necessity of armed force on both sides to maintain the pact. But this very necessity makes the more essential the fight of French Communism and of the united front against French imperialism, militarism and fascism ; since, so long as the armed force remains a bourgeois-controlled army under bourgeois officers and a bourgeois government, we have no confidence that the fight will be waged on behalf of the Soviet Union against Hitler ; on the contrary, it can at any moment be turned to alliance with Hitler, and in the last resort most certainly will be so turned to alliance with fascism against the workers and against the Soviet Union, unless our organisation within the army is superior. Therefore we need to fight all the more for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and of the bourgeois officers, and for a Workers' France and a French Workers' Army, which alone will certainly stand by the Soviet Union. This question is, however, only a secondary question for Britain at present ; here we have to face the fact that the British Government is acting as the ally of Hitler, and this is the plain front of our fight.

ON the British-German side diplomatic manœuvres may be noted to hold Locarno in reserve as a weapon against the Franco-Soviet Pact, in order to prevent France hindering the British-German plans. The calculation is a simple one and is openly stated in the German press. If Germany begins war on the Soviet Union, and France stands by the pact and fights on the same side as the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany, then Germany will at once invoke Locarno to call for Britain to come into the war on its side. Questioned directly in the House of Commons whether this was the view of the British Foreign Office, Sir John Simon gave on May 2 a highly oracular reply to the effect that Britain would not " automatically " intervene in such a case, but that there was a " proviso " that in certain circumstances it might do so :

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> Suppose that Russia and Germany were to get into conflict and France went to the help of Russia by invading Germany, would that bring this country in "automatically" on the side of Germany? The answer was No. If Germany attacked Russia and in view of the Franco-Russian Treaty of Mutual Assistance France went to the assistance of Russia by attacking Germany, the Locarno Treaty would not put this country in those circumstances under any obligation to go to the assistance of Germany. That was the general proposition, but there was a proviso that should be stated.
>
> In order that that should be possible and Germany have no claim under Locarno upon us, then of course the assistance of France to Russia must be given in virtue of certain stipulations of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The terms of the prospective Franco-Russian Pact, so far as they were known, would be subordinated to the operation of the Locarno Treaties.

This declaration, worthy of Grey in pre-1914 years, deserves close scrutiny, for it is the type of declaration which may easily prove to contain the seeds of future war. Under the ambiguous diplomatic language can be seen the loophole of preparation of future British intervention on the side of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union, if circumstances should arise for this; since the actual interpretation and operation of the highly obscure clauses of the Covenant, as previous examples have already foreshadowed, can be worked out in a hundred ways when the crisis comes.

FINALLY, one further point of war preparations to which the attention of the working class movement may be usefully directed. This is the question of a War Coalition Government with the inclusion of the Labour Party which is manifestly being discussed and prepared for launching when the time comes. The jubilee united front of war preparation already showed this very clearly. The question has been further sharply presented by the *Observer's* declaration on Morrison in relation to a future war government and Morrison's refusal so far to repudiate this statement, even when commenting on it. The *Observer*, inviting Morrison to join a reconstructed National Government, stated (April 28):

> If only Mr. Herbert Morrison would come in too. He would in War. Why not for Peace?

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It will be observed that this declaration contains two points: (1) an invitation, not necessarily calling for reply, to join a National Government at the present time; (2) a statement of fact, very seriously calling for reply, putting it as a familiar and indisputable fact that Morrison, *i.e.*, the Labour Party leadership, would join a War Coalition Government. What followed? It would have been possible to ignore this statement as mere capitalist press gossip. On the contrary, two explicit replies appeared in the official Labour press, one in the *Daily Herald* and one in the *Forward*. Both these replies completely ignored the main issue from the standpoint of the working-class movement, the war issue. The *Daily Herald* stated (May 1, 1935):

> Morrison's reply, of course, is: "I have not been asked to join the Government, but if I were, why should I help it to undo in Whitehall all the socialist work I am trying to do on the L.C.C. Besides, I am a member of the Labour Party, bound by pledge to carry out its policy, one that the National Government opposes with all its might.

"A Personal Note," in *Forward* (May 11, 1935), stated:

> In the *Observer's* notes of the week for April 28 there appeared an appeal to me to join a reconstructed National Government. I took no notice of it. Some of my friends think I should have done. . . .
>
> All I need say is that I have given all the years of my adult life to Labour and Socialism. I have enjoyed my work and have stuck to it. I have no intention of leaving the Labour Party to join Mr. Baldwin, thank you.

Thus both replies laboriously confine their scope to the fantastic proposal to cross the floor and enter the Baldwin National Government. Both replies leave unrepudiated the really serious charge of readiness to enter a War Coalition Government. Accordingly it is necessary to place the question squarely to Morrison: *Will he explicitly repudiate the charge that he is prepared to enter into a War Coalition Government in the event of war?* Will he and the Labour Party leadership pledge themselves not to enter into a War Coalition Government? If they refuse even to give this pledge, even at the present time before the war is here, the Labour Party workers and trade unionists can only draw their inevitable conclusions and prepare their dispositions for the fight against war accordingly.

R. P. D.

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THE I.L.P. AT DERBY

By WILLIAM RUST

THE Easter Conference of the I.L.P. at Derby was a disappointment to all those workers who had hoped that it would mark an advance on York a year ago and take bolder decisions on the question of the united front and the establishment of a united revolutionary party. Derby was a kind of standstill Conference which in the vital controversial questions did little more than confirm the majority votes of last year. It agreed to continue the united front with the Communist Party on specific issues, the plea for closer co-operation in every day work being rejected. The idea of a united party was endorsed in principle, but with the qualification that nothing practical can be done. It was decided to maintain membership of the "International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity" (the seven "left" Parties), and also to "co-operate" with the Communist International but not to affiliate. From the platform came the usual heavy denunciation of the Communist International and all its works, but from the floor came no organised counter-attack. One extremely retrograde decision was the resolution subordinating the Guild of Youth to the I.L.P., a step undertaken with the definite object of curbing the militancy of the youth.

The Conference also adopted a new policy statement drawn up by the National Administrative Council which in addition to the issues mentioned above dealt with the general policy questions on much the same lines as previous statements. Loosely worded and revolutionary only in certain aspects of its phraseology it could neither serve as a means of rallying the workers or of clarifying the views of the I.L.P. members. (For example, the very first paragraph of this statement declared that since the war capitalist production "has been more scientifically organised." Scientifically organised! What a description of the existing crisis, decay, destruction of machinery, inflation, etc., etc.)

This statement was attacked from two sides, by the handful of Trotskyists who wanted to insert some slanders against the Soviet Union, and by the followers of the Revolutionary Policy Committee who were striving after a clearer statement of working-class aims and tasks. The Scottish delegation, the strongest section of the I.L.P., was fully behind the National Administrative Council and took little part in the controversy. Thus, although the N.A.C. accepted some of the London amendments it was strong enough to carry the day on all the main questions with very little difficulty.

The I.L.P. did not go forward at Derby. In fact, by not advancing it is actually going backwards as in these days of tumultuous class struggle,

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and great historical events no political party of the working class can stand still without losing headway (this process is reflected in the falling membership of the I.L.P.). The development of the working-class fight against the Unemployment Act and for higher wages calls for the much closer co-operation of the I.L.P. with the Communist Party. This is the outstanding lesson of the united front successes achieved during the course of the big agitation this year. But the I.L.P. remains on its old position of a united front only on specific issues, and it rejects the Communist Party proposals for every day co-operation, joint committees and joint membership meetings.

The decision on the Guild of Youth question is also likely, adversely, to effect the development of the united front in Britain as indeed the advance of the revolutionary movement as a whole. According to the conference decision the Guild now loses its autonomy and becomes subordinated to the political line of the I.L.P. This means that the youth who long ago reached a much clearer revolutionary position than the majority of the I.L.P., have now got to renounce their own convictions, rescind their previous decisions and fall into line with the I.L.P., including the anti-Comintern policy of the N.A.C.

The Derby Conference took this decision on the formal grounds that the policy of the youth movement must be subordinated to the adult body, but it is clear that no formal disciplinary question is here at stake. The disciplinary argument is being used by the I.L.P. leadership as a cover for its offensive against the militant line of the Guild, its attempt to overturn the democratically arrived at decisions of the Guild. In fact, the attitude of the I.L.P. leaders looks suspiciously like an attempt to drive out militant branches and to win a majority at all costs. Branches not signifying a prior acceptance of the Derby resolution are not to be allowed representation at the Guild's Whitsun Conference, whilst, on the other hand, special representation is to be allowed to delegates representing young members of the I.L.P.

At Whitsun the Guild will undoubtedly face its biggest crisis since its formation as all issues have now come to a head, and the question as to whether it is to go forward on revolutionary lines or to be dragged backward by Brockway and Co. has now to be fought out. It is to be hoped that the Revolutionary Policy Committee will rally behind the youth in this fight and recover from its mistake at Derby where the N.A.C. resolution on this was actually introduced by J. Gaster, a leading R.P.C. member.

For over two years the I.L.P. leadership has co-operated with the seven "left" parties of the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity and repulsed the Comintern on the pretext that by this means a wide international unity would be achieved. But what are the practical results? Only disintegration. Several of the bodies concerned are openly in favour of a Fourth International, and the I.L.P. itself, which

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two years ago wanted " to take part in the work of the Comintern," frequently lends itself to the anti-Comintern propaganda of its international associates. Thus, under the pretext of seeking unity the I.L.P. remains in the *cul-de-sac* of isolation with no prospect of getting out of it unless a sharp change of policy is made.

This line of bolstering up this " International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity " may suit those leaders whose sole intention is to find a means of keeping the I.L.P. away from the Communist International, but it is very harmful to the I.L.P. itself. Many members of the I.L.P. realise this and although the Conference decided to continue the present line several branch resolutions, such as the following from Wood Green, expressed strong opposition :

> The Paris Conference of February, 1935, made it abundantly clear that the tendencies within these parties as a whole constitute a menace to real revolutionary unity. The support (open in some cases and disguised in others) for a Fourth International, and the failure to distinguish between the tactical errors of the Communist International and the fundamentally false basis of the Second International prove that further association with the so-called " Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity " would only create further confusion in the international position. The I.L.P. therefore will in future cease to associate itself with the Bureau.

A resolution in favour of " obtaining a basis of agreement with the C.I.," sponsored by the Revolutionary Policy Committee, was defeated in favour of another declaring for " co-operation." But in the hands of the N.A.C. " co-operation " is likely to be only another word for bitter hostility as witness the fact that McGovern's vicious tirade against the Comintern and denunciation of British Communists, " as commercial travellers paid by Moscow gold," was fully endorsed by Campbell Stephen when he moved the N.A.C.'s recommendations on international associations. Maxton explained that McGovern was only expressing his personal opinion, but how strange it is that the N.A.C. chooses as its spokesman on unity questions, just those members who are so violently opposed to unity !

But in reality McGovern (described by the *Manchester Guardian* " as abusive as any Labour or Tory speaker "), was only expressing the declared policy of the N.A.C. in more vulgar and insulting language. According to the N.A.C. " The financial and political domination of the Communist International by the Russian Communist Party prevents it from functioning as an effective working-class international."

This line of attack on the Comintern has been carried on for a long time by Fenner Brockway and others, and it has been answered both from within the I.L.P. and without. It was answered at the Conference by

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Jack Gaster, who attacked the "apparent belief that international solidarity assistance was wrong," and by the resolution of the Brentford and Chiswick branch declaring that

> We recognise that the leading rôle of the C.P.S.U. in the Communist International is due to its revolutionary experience, exemplified by the fact of its being the only Marxist party in the pre-war Second International. . . . . The Independent Labour Party therefore is determined to make every effort to extend its collaboration with the Communist International and maintains that there is no hope that a unified International Revolutionary Movement will be secured except by revolutionary parties entering the Communist International.

Such are the views of the left workers in the I.L.P., views which will certainly not be shaken by capitalist press bogies about wicked Moscovites buying up Britishers. Leaders who have to fall back on such "arguments" are actually betraying their own political bankruptcy and inability to answer the revolutionary case.

If these attacks on the Soviet Union and the Communist International were only an expression of political bankruptcy it would indeed be bad enough. But it so happens that they directly fit in with the interests of British Imperialism which, having successfully sabotaged the proposed Eastern Pact, was, about the time of the Easter Conference, engaged in undermining the negotiations between France and the Soviet Union which ultimately, despite British hostility, led to the signing of the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance. This attitude of the National Government lends additional significance to the fact that the N.A.C. decided at the Conference to withdraw the following phrase from their policy statement:

> The Soviet Union is the Socialist citadel in a hostile capitalist world and must be defended at all costs.

This unexplained withdrawal was challenged by a member of the Revolutionary Policy Committee, but without result.

The Derby Conference met at a rather important moment in the continuous struggle for the defence of the Soviet Union, but far from rallying workers against the anti-Soviet plans of British Imperialism it must be said that the Conference platform rather contributed to the disorganising of the working class fight.

On the question of the formation of a united revolutionary party the Conference contented itself with a general declaration in favour, but rejected "any attempt to combine the I.L.P. and the Communist Party" as this "would have divisive rather than unifying results." This statement was added to by Maxton who told the Conference that:

> He could not say that they were now ready for the unification of the I.L.P. and the Communist Party. The possibility of a new workers' party being formed with the I.L.P. and the Communist Party as the

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> central core was one not of the far distant future. It was, in fact, very near to them.

This was all the Conference had to say on what is undoubtedly the most burning question now confronting the revolutionary working-class movement in Britain. There were, of course, oppositional views and resolutions put against the official line, but even the Revolutionary Policy Committee hesitated to do more than express itself in favour of " overcoming the difficulties " preventing the formation of a united party.

In striking contrast to this evading of the practical issue of what is to be done in order to achieve a united party, the Communist Party, in a letter addressed to the I.L.P. on the eve of the Conference, proposed the setting up of a joint commission by the two parties in order to prepare the organisation of a unity conference.

What is there to prevent the setting up of such a commission ? Certainly there are many difficulties both political and organisational, but these can only be solved by thorough discussion and a comradely attempt to find an agreed basis. In any case the firm desire of the Communist Party to establish unity is one guarantee that the discussions will not be fruitless.

From the standpoint of the needs of the situation, no one can gainsay the imperative need for unity. The movement would be strengthened tenfold if the revolutionary workers of both parties were united under a single revolutionary leadership, and the united front would go forward with a greater impetus than ever before. And as Harry Pollitt stated in his fraternal speech to the Conference, the formation of a united party :

> Will not only result in a tremendous strengthening of the revolutionary forces in Britain, but will at once result in thousands of unattached revolutionary workers at present outside the ranks of the I.L.P. and the C.P. joining up and bringing further force and power to our united party.

This statement of Pollitt's, which is an incontestable fact, is at the same time a full answer to Maxton. What does he mean by his " new workers' party " ? Is it to have a revolutionary programme, and what should be its organisational basis ? Maxton's vague talk is only confusing the issue and delaying action. Let the real issue be faced. The future mass revolutionary party must be based on the programme of the Communist International, and the first essential step in the direction of such a party is the unification of the Communist Party and the I.L.P. The leaders of the I.L.P. cannot bring about unity by hoping and praying for some miraculous changes in the working-class movement as a substitute for taking joint action with the Communist Party, which is the only organised revolutionary force ready for unity.

The " sectarianism " of the Communist Party is another reason advanced against unity now, although it is admitted the Communist Party has a " revolutionary theoretical basis." But this argument hardly presents

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serious difficulties seeing that the sectarianism admittedly only arises from insufficiency of mass contact, often caused by the reformist ban on revolutionary organisations. The uniting of all revolutionary forces is precisely the way to achieve the overcoming of such weaknesses. In any case, seeing that the Communist Party is growing rapidly and is now bigger than the I.L.P. (*e.g.*, the C.P. membership in South Wales has been trebled during the last few months), it is hardly in place for the I.L.P. leaders to emphasise the obstacle of sectarianism. In point of fact, whatever the weaknesses of the Communist Party may be it has been the driving force in the united front activities and has consistently fought for revolutionary unity.

The reasons given by the I.L.P. against unity now are not adequate ones. The difficulty lies not with the Communist Party, but is to be found in the indecision of the I.L.P. arising from the divisions within its ranks, the fact that although many members want to travel the road of revolutionary class struggle, others (including the majority of the leaders) are inclined to compromise with reformism and even to find a road back to the Labour Party. A third section, a tiny group of parasitic Trotskyists, who have fastened themselves on the I.L.P., fulfil the rôle of causing confusion amongst the militant members by spreading slanders against the Soviet Union and catch phrases about the "Stalinist Bureaucracy," etc., etc. Fenner Brockway points to these three lines as proof of the vitality and freedom of expression within the I.L.P. He, of course, has reason to be satisfied as the present divisions enabled the leadership to keep their grip as was shown at Derby. In point of fact, the Trotskyist elements were fostered by the I.L.P. leaders who use them in the struggle against the Comintern.

The decisions of the Derby Conference show that the struggle between reformism and revolution is still going on within the I.L.P. It is an uneven battle with reformist views and traditions still strongly entrenched. The development of the united front with the Communist Party has signified a big advance on the revolutionary road, but the failure to transform it into day-to-day action, the reluctance to face the issue of a united revolutionary party and the refusal to achieve a real co-operation with the Communist International are all dragging the party back to reformism. Above all, the fact that the I.L.P. press and platform is used so frequently as a sounding board for anti-Soviet propaganda shows how dangerous is the influence of the reformist elements.

The outcome of this struggle will depend on the resoluteness displayed by the left elements, particularly those organised around the Revolutionary Policy Committee. Historically the whole situation is in their favour, but to achieve real results they will have to organise systematically and carry on a really practical and ideological fight against the forces of reformism within the party.

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LANCASHIRE—A "DESPERATE" AREA

By A GROUP OF LANCASHIRE READERS

[*This is the third of a series of articles*[1] *preparatory to the holding of a United Front Delegate Conference on the position in Lancashire, particularly in relation to the Mosley offensive which has developed there. A preliminary announcement of the date and place of this Conference will be found on the inside front cover. Readers are urged meanwhile to send in their suggestions covering the subjects they wish to see discussed at the Conference, or the names and addresses of organisations or individuals whom they consider should be invited to take part.*]

IT was the Imperialist Nelson who started that old British custom of ignoring that which you do not wish to see. The National Government continues the tradition when it excludes Lancashire from the list of depressed areas. These great statesmen make many subtle distinctions to prove that Lancashire is not in a "depressed" position, and it is true only in the sense that desperate is a better choice of terms. There is not one area, with the possible exception of South Wales, where there is such general poverty and unhealthy conditions.

Mosley knows this. He bases his hope of founding a mass movement in this county, precisely upon the desperate poverty facing masses of people ; many of whom had hoped that Lancashire would regain its pre-eminent position in the markets of the world, but who now hear even leading capitalists dolefully proclaim that Lancashire can never regain its lost leadership of industry.

Mosley knows, too, that there is not a county in this country where wages are so low, where the lash of the Means Test has been wielded by the National Government with such brutality as in Lancashire. He is aided by additional factors ; in no place have the workers been betrayed so often in their fights against the employers. The many defeats, due to the policy of class collaboration, have weakened the trade unions and driven workers to despair.

Lancashire's Sweat Shops

The textile industry is now notorious as a sweated industry. The conditions of the workers are well below the level of 1914. Before the

[1]The previous articles in this series were *The Cotton Industry and the Fascist Offensive in Lancashire* by R. Palme Dutt (April), and *Mosley and Lancashire* (May) by William Rust. There are still a few copies of the former issue available. The latter with additional matter is being reprinted in pamphlet form (see front inside cover). Both April and May issues can be obtained for 7d. each post free from THE LABOUR MONTHLY, 7 John Street, London, W.C.1.

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war the average wage of a four-loom weaver working plain sorts was 28s. Recently the *Cotton Factory Times* (April 12, 1935), published the following average wage rates for all textile workers as follows :—

Ashton, 28s. 8d. ; Manchester, 28s. 6d. ; Stockport and Hyde, 30s. ; Preston and Chorley, 30s. 6d. ; several other districts, 27s. It will be seen that that wages are, in some towns, even lower than in 1914, while the cost of living is 41 per cent. higher than 1913-14.

The above figures do not give the real picture of the poverty. Perhaps it is brought home more sharply when we consider that at a recent meeting of the Lancashire P.A.C. there was a discussion on giving relief to many weavers who were earning less than a £1 a week.

This is frequently done in the main spinning towns, Bolton and Oldham, where the piecers, married and with a family, are earning about 23s. to 26s. a week. The Redundancy Plan of the spinning employers will throw out of the industry 6,000 spinners and piecers. It will cut down the possibility of piecers ever becoming spinners, and the piecer must continue to work for a pittance, less than the dole, without any hope of improvement—but haunted by the spectre of the Means Test. Here the fear of the Means Test and the competition for Unemployment stamps are the sole reasons why many piecers and the low paid card room workers tolerate the conditions in the mill.

Thousands of girls in the card room are working for 20s. to 23s. per week, and the modest wage demands which are being made in the bleaching and dyeing section for increases from 18s. to 21s. a week for women and from 30s. to 34s. for men, show how ill-paid are the workers in this section of the textile trade.

The " speed-up " is a common feature of all sections of the textile trade, but perhaps the best evidence of its deleterious effect on the health of the worker is afforded by the more-looms system in the weaving section of the trade. In 1933 the Medical Officer of Health for Padiham made a protest in his report against women working on the six-looms system because it was destroying their health. This has more recently been supplemented by Mr. Duckworth, of the Blackburn Protection Branch, Weavers' Union, who said at a meeting of the Blackburn Insurance Committee, " that he thought that the more-looms system had resulted in more sickness among women weavers." (*Cotton Factory Times*, April 19, 1935.)

Further robbery takes place in the weaving trade by the extensive system of fining. Bad and cheap material is being bought by the mill-owners, but the weavers are expected to weave the best cloth. The slightest fault is subject to a fine from 6d. to even 5s. occasionally in extreme cases.

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At the time of writing the Board of Assessors is meeting in Manchester, hearing the objections to the new agreement which is to be legalised in the textile industry. The agreement will mean heavy wage cuts from 2s. to 6s. per £ for weavers on the higher grade cloth, and will mean a general extension of the more-looms system. It will produce mass unemployment both from the extension of the more-looms system and by the fact that some of the smaller firms will be driven to the wall because they will have to pay on the price list.

At the same time the Master Cotton Spinners have just now refused to grant compensation to the 6,000 spinners and piecers who will be scrapped along with the 10,000,000 spindles. Mr. Wiggins, president of the Master Cotton Spinners, expressed to the press the callous indifference of the employers: "If a mill is burned down or has to stop for some other reason the employer has not been called upon in the past to compensate operatives, and it is difficult to understand why he should in a scheme like this . . . . "[1] But the spinning employers who have drawn profits from the industry for many years will be compensated for scrapping their spindles to the tune of £2,500,000 in ten years.

Many bitter conflicts have concentrated attention upon the foul conditions in the textile trades, but in other industries conditions are almost as bad. In mining, engineering and railways the men are being speeded-up and each new drive for increased production brings its concomitant evil—Unemployment.

Mining

The Lancashire coalfield is one of the most difficult and dangerous in the country. Many of the richer seams have been exhausted and this accounts largely for the fall in output. The mines are deep and the seams thin. The mines are terribly hot; the Abram Pit near Wigan has a reputation for its intolerable heat and bad ventilation. During the past few years terrible inroads have been made into the conditions of the miners; as is evident by comparing the recent report of the Joint Accountants to the Lancashire and Cheshire District Wages Board for the months November and December, 1934, and January, 1935, with the report issued by the Yorkshire Miners' Association in 1931 on "Colliery Amalgamations" (a Preliminary Report on the Application of the Coal Mines Act, 1930). This latter report on page 22 deals with Lancashire and shows that wages fell from 12s. 2d. per shift in 1928 to 11s. 9¾d. in 1930: whilst output rose over the same period from 17.02 cwts. to 17.32 cwts. The Accountants' Report, 1935, shows that output per man shift has risen to 19.07 cwts., but wages have fallen to 9s. 1½d. per shift.

The men are compelled to work overtime and clear the coalface so that the legal 7½ hours' day stretches out to nine and ten-hour shifts quite

[1] *Cotton Factory Times*, April 12, 1935.

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often. Young and strong miners are put on the conveyor runs as price fixers, and those not so strong and energetic must run the gauntlet of vulgar abuse from the firemen and pit manager.

The recent victorious strike at the Maypole Colliery, Wigan, arose as much from the sweating and bullying to which the miners were subjected, as from anything else. The high rate of 13s. 8d. a shift, won by this action of the Maypole men, is certain to find a good response in other pits and set a movement afoot demanding an increase in rates and a slowing down of the insane drive for coal at the expense of the life and limb of the men.

The lack of consideration by the mineowners, the constant evasion of safety regulations, was demonstrated in the "accidents" at the Plank Lane Pit, Leigh, and the Edge Green explosion at Ashton-in-Makerfield. Both these accidents took place within a few weeks, the total cost of life was forty-six.

There is much short time working in the mining areas, and when it is considered that the day wage men get only 7s. 9d. a shift and work three shifts a week, it is clear that they are not getting even the necessary food for so arduous work. Mr. J. McGurk, Secretary of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation, exposed the miserable wages of the miners to the delegates of the M.F.G.B. Annual Conference (1932) thus:

> A man was killed three weeks ago. I went to fix compensation for the widow. His three years' average wages work out at 25s. a week. The wife had to go out part time as a cook to enable them to live; 25s. is typical. That man's wages is typical of thousands of other men in the counties of Lancashire and Cheshire.
>
> (Official Report M.F.G.B. Conference, 1932.)

Engineering

In many of the Manchester engineering factories output per man has been increased by 25 per cent. to 30 per cent., whilst the skilled engineer is being displaced by youth and semi-skilled labour. An increasing proportion of the labour of the bigger engineering concerns of Manchester, for example Metro-Vickers, consists of youth and female labour. These young boys and girls are working for 12s. to 26s. a week. Though Metro-Vickers at the moment is making big returns on its war production, it takes advantage of every possibility to cut the wage standards. It is the custom at this concern to start unskilled men at the rate of 50s. 6d. and increase them to 54s. 6d. after five years. At the moment the firm is extending the lower rate to skilled men who are coming from other engineering shops.

The following extract from the report of Bro. Blackburn, Organising District Delegate of No. 9 Division of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, could be very well applied to the majority of engineering factories, since it shows how the conditions of the men are undermined:

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> During the past three years, and since the inception of the assembling department (unskilled labour) local and central conferences have been held wholesale in an attempt to limit encroachment upon skilled work. In all negotiations we received scant ceremony, and the game went on of reducing wages by transferring work to this department. Piecework has also been introduced as a general method in production, and many abuses of existing agreements had been suffered by the men. These matters, coupled to a general speeding up, brought the workers to a volcanic state, and the eruption occurred on February 11. (A.E.U. *Monthly Journal*, March, 1935.)

The "eruption" was in the form of an unofficial strike which resulted in several abuses being rectified and would have won complete victory had the Executive given it support. The factory is one of the largest textile engineering concerns in the country. The dispute was largely a fight for employment. This industry is declining with the textile trade as a whole. The skilled men know that once outside the factory there is little chance of getting back, particularly when semi-skilled and youth labour can now be used in the industry.

Clothing and some other Sweated Trades

The wave of strikes which, during 1933-34, swept the Manchester clothing industry are, perhaps, the best evidence of the slave conditions in the factories. In 1933 there were 20 disputes involving 2,700 workers with a total loss of 6,000 days. In 1934 there were 24 disputes involving 3,900 workers and a loss of 35,000 working days.

Thousands of young girls are engaged in the industry at the following "slave" rates:—14-15 years, commence at 6s. 6d. a week with half-yearly increases reaching 28s. at 18 after having completed not less than three years' "apprenticeship." The apprenticeship period is a farce and a dodge to continue paying low rates. The youngsters don't learn the trade but generally specialise upon one operation, consequently they are often unfitted to go to any place other than that which "apprenticed" them. Those fortunate enough to keep in the trade after serving the period of learning get, for women, about 28s. to 32s. on piecework a week. The men are played off against the women workers, and this was particularly apparent in connection with the new National Agreement, which will result in heavy wage cuts of 3s. or 4s. per week for male workers. The speed-up and specialisation, plus the flood of cheap youth labour drawn from the youngsters fresh from school and barred from other industries, is depressing the wages and resulting in mass unemployment in the trade. Despite the Trade Board Acts, wage rates are often dodged in the smaller shops and the most unhealthy conditions obtain.

Unemployment and Health Conditions

Lancashire contributes 700,000 odd to the two millions "superfluous scrap," referred to by MacDonald and Chamberlain. There were 454,013

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on the live register on March 25, 1935, 101,937 were textile workers and 50,728 were registered in Manchester and Salford district. It is difficult to obtain exact information in regard to the thousands who are not on the register. But take just one town ; Burnley alone gives telling figures of the vicious application of the economy drive against the workless. Recipients of Outdoor Relief increased by 33 per cent., from 3,260 on March 24, 1934, to 4,235 on March 23, 1935.

" Proud Preston " has 11,983 unemployed, that is about 25 per cent. of the working population, but it is by no means the worst as the following figures will show :—Hadfield, 47.8 per cent. ; Stalybridge, 32.4 per cent. ; Great Harwood, 50 per cent. ; Ashton, 25.6 and Blackburn, 30 per cent.

Dry figures cannot express the untold misery created by the Means Test and unemployment. The independence and hard working nature of the Lancashire folk is proverbial. Many of the older folk never dreamed even in their worst nightmare that such a terrible scourge could be visited upon them. Men are broken and demoralised by this vicious system. It's a grim joke that men are taking over the function of women in the Lancashire cotton towns. The woman works ; the man looks after the children and prepares her meals. Hundreds of homes are broken up. The sons sleep in a neighbour's house so that they can declare to the P.A.C. official that they are in lodgings and thus get extended benefit. The youngsters and those not so young trek to the south in a fruitless search for work. This is shown in the decrease in the population of several Lancashire towns. Great Harwood had a population of nearly 15,000 in 1921, the Sanitary Inspector calculated it at 12,500 in June, 1934. Accrington and many other towns show a similar exodus.

Since the National Government came to power 170,000 workers of Lancashire have been denied their rights to Health Insurance Benefit. This will mean that countless women must go through the purgatory of childbirth inadequately prepared, denied even the paltry maternity benefits. Small wonder that the death rate among children is so high in Lancashire towns. The Infantile death rate in St. Helens is 116 per 1,000 ; in Wigan 110 ; Manchester and Burnley 75. In the working-class districts of Manchester the death rate is terribly high, *e.g.*, Collegiate 143 ; Ardwick, St. Clements and New Cross 120.

A strong anti-Fascist movement is essential to combat the reactionary ravings of Mosley and drive his movement out of this area. Let the victory against the Blackshirts be the beginning of a movement which will lead to bigger victories for the workers ; greater unity and an end to the disastrous policy which has weakened our fighting organisations and leaves us easy prey for the employers. Let it put an end to the organised destruction of machinery and life which reaches its highest expression in Fascism, and lead us to a happier and better life worthy of the men who have made Lancashire famous throughout the world.

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ABYSSINIA—ITALY'S MANCHUKUO ?

By J. W. SMITH

[*The following article by the President of the Wolverhampton Central Branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union was completed before the recent intensification of the Abyssinian crisis now temporarily settled by the agreement of both Italy and Abyssinia to the terms of arbitration proposed by the League of Nations Council on May 26. It is clear, however, that the danger of an Italian offensive against Abyssinia is by no means past, for the very next day the Italian Government announced that troops would continue to be sent to East Africa, while Mussolini himself stated on the same day that "the menace in East Africa is real and grave, and is steadily increasing." To indicate the attitude of a section of the British capitalist class as represented by the Beaverbrook press towards this menace of a new colonial robbery, it is only necessary to quote the "Evening Standard" on May 8 which in the following terms as good as invited Italy to go ahead. After referring to the "enormous expenditure of lives and equipment" that might be necessary, nevertheless, stated the leading article, Italy's conquest of Abyssinia would bring her a "rich eventual reward," for "it would provide a vast new outlet for Italy's trade and her population . . . . the plans of Mussolini are no concern of Britain's. This country, rich in colonial possessions which are still largely undeveloped, need feel no jealousy at the colonial aspirations of other Powers."*]

ABYSSINIA'S prominent position in the political news of to-day surprises none but those who believe that the clash between the Italian native troops and the soldiers of Abyssinia at Wal-Wal was an accident. The outrageous demands of Italy and the consequential tension that these bring are forcing the eyes of the world to focus attention on the matter.

Twice already the Abyssinian and Italian troops have come to blows over territory which the Italians claim as their own. The proposed indemnity demanded by Italy from Abyssinia and her acknowledged salute to the Italian flag, would, even if Abyssinia acquiesced, be just a mere prelude to the dictator's intention of making Abyssinia a protectorate of Italy.

What other intention could Mussolini have ? What other purpose can he have in mind for the mighty call to arms he has sent out ? Does it need such a show of force over an affair which frequently happens on the borders of Abyssinia between British colonial troops, or the French colonial troops, and the wandering natives of Abyssinia who seek new pastures for their cattle on adjacent territory, as the need demands, when the season changes ?

Furthermore, Wal-Wal is disputed territory ; it is claimed by Abyssinia, and her claim is not the claim of a usurper with the decadent vision of a

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Bonaparte, but the claim of an independent state which was established long before Mussolini put on his long trousers or had his first lesson in imperialism.

Both Italy and Abyssinia are members of the League of Nations, yet instead of applying to that worthy body for redress as the offended country, Mussolini immediately set machinery to work mobilising his army reserves and dispatching his boisterous demands to Addis Ababa. With this show of force he repeatedly ignored any gesture from the League, and when Ras Tafari compromised to the British request for making certain disputed territory a neutral zone, he rejected the proposed commission to be set up on the grounds of its composition He nevertheless accepted the neutral zone proposition in word only, for in actual deed he replied with the greater armed force he sent to Somaliland.

The cause of the dispute lies not in who owns the territory, or in the unruliness of the nomadic tribes ; but rather in the policy that Fascist Italy is pursuing. For years Mussolini has been teaching the Italians the need for colonial expansion. He has taken away the status of woman and told her in effect that her place is to give birth to soldiers for the state—to be the future cannon fodder of his dream. Boys are taught at an early age the use of the rifle, while every trusted male subject has been imbued with the spirit of chauvinism. His blackshirts have taught that their future lies in Africa. The conquerors of the world is an ambitious term, but it is one which is frequently used in Italy.

Italy's connection with Africa dates back to the purchase in 1870 of the port of Assob. In 1885 Italy annexed it. A month later the Egyptians evacuated Massowah, a port a few miles away on the same Red Sea shore, to deal with trouble in Sudan, and the Italians also occupied that. By purchase and treaty Italy's portion of Africa has increased to the respectable size of 634,000 square miles. By royal decree the districts around Assob were welded into the Colony of Eritrea, so named after the Erythraeum Mare of the Romans. She has since acquired Libya and Somaliland, and Jubaland was ceded to her by England in 1924.

These annexations led to conflict with Abyssinia. After the disgrace of Dogali in 1887, when a complete column of Italian troops with the exception of one man was annihilated, two years later the Emperor Menelik, who had just succeeded to the throne, was tricked into a treaty which the Italians claimed was such as to force upon Abyssinia the obligation of seeking Italian advice on all questions of foreign policy. She could not deal direct with any Great Power, only through Italy. When the full significance of the Italian version of the treaty got to Menelik's ears he denounced and then repudiated it. He could do no other for the treaty made Abyssinia an Italian protectorate. Then, after many frontier incidents had happened, the Italians took action.

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With the memory of Dogali still fresh in their minds, the cabinet of Crispi ordered general Baratieri, the commander at Massowah to invade Tigre. General Baratieri took the field in the February, 1896, at the head of 15,000 rifles and fifty guns, but he met with two reverses even before he came up with the main body of Menelik's army.

The domestic troubles of Abyssinia were put aside and every province sent warriors, rifles and guns to Menelik who was stationed at Adowa. Altogether he had 120,000 men with not a small amount of artillery. His soldiers used a peculiar mixture of old and modern type rifles.

The Italian force came upon the Abyssinian array of arms near the town of Adowa about the 27th of February. On March 1st, Baratieri gave the order to attack and his force advanced in four columns. In less than an hour the advancing column, General Cilbertone's brigade, was completely surrounded by the Abyssinian forces, and after offering stubborn resistance till late in the afternoon, was compelled to surrender. The general himself was killed. Before night fell the three remaining brigades were completely encircled by the Abyssinian forces and cut to pieces.

For the first time in modern history a coloured force completely smashed a modern white army. The battle itself is considered to be the greatest disaster that any European force has suffered at any time. It was overwhelming in every degree for the Italians lost out of an army of approximately 15,000 strong, 4,500 white and 2,000 native troops dead and wounded, and nearly 5,000 were taken prisoners.

That the Italians met with such complete disaster was not due to any lack of courage on the part of the common soldiers—Abyssinians say they fought well—but to the gross incompetency of their leader. Few battles have been fought that have had such far reaching results. The prestige of Abyssinia was established and interested people, with money to burn, came to visit the country. The remnants of the Italian army returned to Massowah in ignominy. Italy's military prestige had been shattered in the eyes of the world overnight. The Italian Government fell, and a very humiliating treaty was concluded, which provided for the payment of ten millions of lire indemnity, and which recognised the absolute independence of Ethiopia.

Mussolini has a problem before him of no mean importance. He must know of the type of people who inhabit Abyssinia, and giving due consideration to all the issues involved, the average person can only assume that the political situation in Italy must be extremely grave. The Italian budget has shown a deficit of many millions of lire for a number of years. Unemployment grows while the capitalists of Italy grow fat. The many strikes that have taken place recently in the various industries of that country show that the workers are in revolt. There is trouble even among

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the rank-and-file of the blackshirt movement, and to stave off the coming struggle of the working class and the Italian ruling class, Mussolini has thrown the dice in favour of war. In other words Mussolini is sitting on a political volcano which threatens to blow the Italian ruling class sky high. He sees in his Abyssinian venture a valve with which he can release this pressure and strengthen Fascism abroad. But he forgets that a decisive defeat in the Abyssinian hills will bring about a decisive defeat in Italy, for what better encouragement could the working class of Italy have than a crushing defeat of the Fascist army abroad ?

The Abyssinian question is indeed of grave international importance, more so than the capitalist press indicates. It means that, if Mussolini's venture is a success, the working class of Italy has a great burden to shoulder. None the less, with the disgrace of the battle of Dogali before her, Italy urged for redress which her military leaders were too incompetent to accomplish at Adowa. Now, with the stigma of that battle before her, she urges for final redress with a determined attitude to strengthen Fascism abroad. Mussolini, whose record for savagery is almost unbeaten, is undoubtedly the man for the job, but as astute as he may be for political manœuvring, he has to deal his cards in a manner which will not estrange the friendships of any other imperialist power with interests in Africa. Britain's interest in the Sudan forces her in this to become an active party, for the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy without some assurance that the waters from that country would not be interfered with, would naturally bring a loss of capital there. With this in mind the vagueness of the Stresa talks become clearer and certainly embrace more than European problems. It is significant, too, that the countries concerned in these talks should be England, France and Italy. We therefore cannot be surprised to find that some secret agreement has already been arrived at which satisfies both England and France on the Abyssinian question for the support they will give in European affairs. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the attitude the League of Nations adopted concerning that vital question. The contention that some sort of secret agreement has been arrived at between the British and Italian Governments since the former suggested a commission to deal with the trouble, is supported by the fact that Italy proposed to employ 4,000 Egyptian labourers building roads in the colony of Eritrea near the Ethiopian frontier. That was the main reason for Abyssinia's last protest to the League when she lodged a request for her grievances to be heard on April 15, 1935.

With everything in active preparation—army bases and military roads in both Eritrea and Somaliland and the European end of his job seemingly settled, Mussolini appears to be simply waiting a suitable opportunity for his final onslaught on Abyssinia. Should war come and Italy conquer Abyssinia, it would be the greatest blow that " dark " Africa has yet

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received. Indeed, it would strengthen the Fascist forces in Italy and throughout the world and make the task of international working-class movements much harder than it is to-day. Such a victory for Fascist Italy would not only strengthen Fascism throughout the world, but would stimulate a desire in all capitalist countries where a pretence to capitalist democracy still exists to throw such form of government overboard in favour of open and complete Fascist dictatorships, and peace in the capitalist world would not only be threatened, it would have gone.

Under Italian subjugation the country would become a raw material base for Italian imperialism, which would have the effect of preventing all economic developments except those in common with the interests of Italian imperialism. There is no doubt that an agreement would be arranged in order to secure through the various *rases* now controlling the provinces in Ethiopia, a social base within the country. We can foresee Italian colonies spreading throughout these provinces controlling the raw material for the home land. This is not an impossibility, particularly when it is recalled that although Abyssinia is in the heart of Africa, owing to its elevation, its climate is akin to the temperate zone which makes it possible for Europeans to live there.

Other than the development of certain resources for supplying raw material to Italy, Ethiopian backwardness would be perpetuated even more so by an Italian conquest, and her art and culture and the life of the nation as a whole would be paralised in favour of Italian imperialism. So, in spite of the fact that there exists a state of feudalism in Abyssinia, if war must come the working class of the entire world is interested in supporting Ethiopian independence—in a decisive defeat of the Italian fascist forces on the battlefield. It is interested in this because a decisive victory for Abyssinia would stimulate the progressive potential forces within the country which would ultimately lead to an overthrow of its reactionary régime and make possible an advance forward in developing the country on modern lines. It is further interested in the defeat of the Italian forces because that would be a blow struck at the first citadel of Fascism which would bring the day nearer of reckoning for the Italian working class.

That there are progressive forces in Abyssinia can be seen by peeping into the prisons of Ethiopia. In prison in that country lies a political prisoner about whom few foreign visitors have heard. He is the grandson of Menelik—the first son of his first daughter—and he lies in prison because he is a democrat. For some time after the death of Menelik he ruled Abyssinia. His crime lay not only in the fact that he wanted a change in the form of governing the country, but that he had made agreements with the Mad Mullah and his deverishes, who were causing

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not a little trouble to the British and French Governments. His unpardonable sin came, however, when he flouted the religion of the " King of Kings " by becoming a disciple of Islam. In a battle between his forces and the forces of the present Ras Tafari, he was defeated. Some of his army fled across the frontier into the Sudan, his father was killed and he was made a political prisoner.

Ras Tafari has been asked why he does not send his prisoner into exile, but his answer was that Abyssinia had another way of dealing with her political prisoners. Why ? Because he knows that his prisoner has a large following in the country. The coming struggle with Italy might easily provide the solution to two problems. An Abyssinian victory would end the Fascist menace in Africa and might provide the necessary spirit the progressive forces require in the country for ending Abyssinia's lethargy by ending an archaic régime. For the moment, however, our slogan must be for Abyssinia's independence !

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A Discussion on Trade Union Problems and Policy—III.[3]

BELOW is printed a further selection of contributions to the discussion commenced in the April issue on Trade Union Problems and Policy. To guide the discussion the following series of six questions have been drawn up. Readers are invited to send in their contributions for publication in succeeding numbers.

1. At the present time many Trade Unions are presenting demands for increased wages, and at the Trades Union Congress last September the Chairman, Mr. A. Conley, spoke of the need for co-ordination of the Trade Union forces. Do you believe such co-ordination is necessary? If so, what in your opinion are the first steps which should be taken towards that objective?
2. What in your opinion should be the line of trade union policy in the present economic situation? What should be the demands of the active workers in the Trade Unions? Where a demand has been tabled for an advance in wages, what in your opinion are the steps which should be taken within the factories and the Unions in order to achieve that demand?
3. What is your opinion of the circular of the Trades Union Congress General Council (on "disruptive movements"), proposing the revision of trade union constitutions with a view to excluding militant trade unionists from election to delegate or official positions? How will it effect trade union democracy and the building up of the Unions?
4. What in your opinion should be the attitude of the Unions to such schemes of rationalisation as are being suggested for a number of industries, i.e., the Cotton Control Board, compulsory amalgamation in mining, etc.?
5. What concrete steps do you think it is possible for the Trade Unions to take in order to prevent the development of Fascism in this country?
6. What in your opinion should be the attitude of the Unions (a) as economic organs and (b) as affiliated bodies to the Labour Party towards the proposals for the formation of a United Front against Fascism and War which the Communist Party and the I.L.P. have made to the Labour Party, in view of the decision of the Labour and Socialist International to allow its affiliated sections freedom of action in this respect?

Contributions should, if possible, be not more than 800 words in length; of course shorter contributions will be welcome. In signing

[3] A list of previous contributions is given at the end of this instalment.

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their reply readers are asked to add the name of their Union with official position if any.

Readers are also urged to send in to the LABOUR MONTHLY the names and addresses of any trade unionists in their area to whom an invitation to take part in this discussion might well be sent.

It should be noted that the answers are individual answers and do not necessarily commit the organisation or part of the organisation of which the contributors are officers or members.

In a later issue it is intended to publish a survey of all the answers.

From a Yorkshire Miner

(1) I agree with R. G. L. Bowyer[1] that Co-ordination of Trade Union forces is necessary. But I don't agree that this co-ordination should be engineered from the top. Every individual trade union member should interest himself in this matter. If the rank and file do not interest themselves in the matter there is a danger of bureaucracy taking charge, as they have done in local struggles, to turn their attention to other things.

An "all-in" conference is certainly a necessity. But why wait for the T.U.C. to call such a conference? Much can be done in the districts by calling conferences of trade unions in various areas.

(2) To Bowyer's remarks on this matter, I would like to add, the entire abolition of piecework. The time for piecework has gone. All price lists remind me of the post card of a coster enticing his donkey by means of a carrot on the end of a stick.

In the Doncaster area, Brodsworth miners, who had been working on a day wage basis, have refused piece rates. A short while ago they struck on this issue. Barnsley stepped in, persuaded them to accept piece rates. Herbert Smith is hoping this has finished the matter. He will be disappointed. The D.C.A. Panel of which Brodsworth is a member, have submitted to Barnsley a resolution asking for a special Council meeting to discuss the matter of a 15s. day wage for the pits in the D.C.A. group. It is also expected that permission to ballot for strike action will be sought. This is just an example of what can be done in the districts. Some of us hope to extend this movement.

(3) The "Black Circular" will certainly encourage fascism and prove itself eventually to be an instrument that will tend to break up trade unionism. It is necessary to keep on sending resolutions of protest to the T.U.C. Like all other capitalist measures, it is up to workers in mines, factories and workshops to break it down. All measures not in the interests of workers must be broken anyhow, anywhere and at any time occasion arises.

(4) Rationalisation should certainly not be encouraged. All measures of this description should be met by strike action and the tabling of demands by the workers concerned. For instance, the mechanising of mines should be met by demands for the abolition of piecework rates and the reduction of hours to 6. If miners were on day wage rates they would be able to so control production that they would be able to do six shifts per week instead of the usual 3 or 4 as is the case to-day. Besides this an opening for thousands of unemployed miners would be created.

(5) 'No Fascist' in any trade union should certainly be the slogan. A multiplication of the conferences against Fascism and War. The setting up of committees from these conferences. Committees to take a leading part in organising

[1]See page 244 of the April issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY.

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meetings, demonstrations and strikes against Fascism and War.

(6) I should suggest here an amalgamation of United Front Committees and Committees against Fascism and War.

G. W. HOLLOWAY (*Yorkshire Main Branch, Yorkshire Miners' Association*).

From a London Labour Councillor

(1) Undoubtedly co-ordination is essential, chiefly because of the atmosphere of apathy, if not of conflict, which exists between certain craft unions and those that cater for the labourers. Craft unions should recognise the fact that a labourer is a labourer whether he sweeps the road or hands a piece of cable to an electrician. This brings me to the point of what steps could and should be taken to co-ordinate :

(*a*) The admittance by craft unions of the right of labourers who assist craftsmen to belong to any general workers unions, with cessation of pilfering of members.

(*b*) Negotiations to be carried out by a council of the various unions affected. Only by cohesion can the workers "stick together."

(*c*) Periodical conferences of the organisers of unions catering for the same industries.

(2) The policy of the trade unions should be to concentrate more on industrial matters. Trade unionists from laymen to leaders should view every political move from the trade union angle, instead of what is often the case of viewing industrial operations from the angle of the respective political parties of which they are members. To further this point of view I would not allow any high official of a trade union to be an M.P. unless he sat as a Trade Unionist.

The demands :—First of all I would start a large national campaign for a £3 per week minimum for labourers, with the existing differences in pay for craftsmen, etc., to be maintained. If this was countered by a rise in prices I would raise the minimum pro rata with the cost of living, with the reservation to concede nothing below the £3. Secondly, a national campaign for better health conditions in factories dealing with such points as dust, noise, smells, ventilation, washing facilities, etc. Action when a demand is made ; more co-operation between organisers and committees of workers ; more enlightenment by officials to the workers in limited liability companies as to the profits made.

(3) Definitely not in favour of any Trade Unionist being barred from delegacy to purely industrial bodies as Trade Councils, or official trade union positions with the reservation that if an individual used his industrial position to the detriment of trade unionism he could be removed by ballot. I consider the circular 16 will lose the Trade Union Movement the active interest of some keen members.

(4) In favour of supporting rationalisation schemes because (*a*) will give more power to workers to use unified action ; (*b*) will make the socialisation of industry easier.

(5) (*a*) Endeavour to get the professional and managerial classes, and all the "black-coated" workers organised and affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. Get trade unionists elected to bodies such as local or territorial Friendly Societies, in fact any associations that carry weight in the country, but workers must watch the character of men they allow to control these bodies.

(6) (*a*) Make more use of the co-operatives and endeavour to get co-operative workers to be more politically and trade union conscious. (*b*) *Re* suggested united front : I believe in freedom of action for bodies but place my greatest faith in a strong Trade Union Movement irrespective of politics.

ANDREW G. SCHIRN (*Member of National Union of General and Municipal Workers, Branch Delegate to West Ham Trades Council and Member of West Ham Town Council*).

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From a Workmen's Pit Inspector

(1) It is true that many Trade Unions are demanding increased wages. This is the result of a rising militancy among the rank-and-file workers. But we must also remember that the officials of these unions carry out a Mondist policy every day and allow the master class to cut wages. These movements for increased wages should certainly be co-ordinated, as our experience in the fight against the National Government's slave act shows clearly that the more workers are massed behind a demand the greater chance of success. The first step should be a conference of all the Trade Unions who are demanding increases, with delegates coming from each local branch. There could be a full conference to co-ordinate all the demands and to decide on a common date for the operation of the policy, and then Sectional Conferences could be held to work out details of activity in each branch and workshop.

(2) In the present economic situation the policy of the Trade Unions should be to drive ahead for improved conditions, *re* higher wages and shorter hours. Huge profits are being made in the heavy industries, and the workers should now take up the offensive and go ahead for improvements. The fight for shorter hours would rally the employed and unemployed and would more than anything else bring them closer to each other. The steps that ought to be taken are: That open branch meetings should be called to discuss the demands, and that a committee could be set up to conduct an agitation inside the factory; a factory meeting could then be called and a committee of action set up, a committee composed of all elements within the factory.

(3) The "Black Circular" of the T.U.C. General Council is fascist in character and will weaken to a considerable degree the resistance of the workers to the attacks of the boss. This will take away all democracy from within the unions and will certainly be responsible for driving members away from the unions.

(4) The attitude of the unions to rationalisation should be complete hostility for it means a worsening of conditions, lower wages, speed-up, etc. The compulsory amalgamation in mining will mean the closing of collieries and the speeding-up of the miner in the collieries kept open. It will strengthen the owners and weaken the miners.

(5) The unions can play a very important part in the fight against Fascism, for the strength of the workers lies in the workshop. There should be anti-Fascist groups set up in every pit and factory. These groups or committees should be closely linked up with the trade union branch and with the national movement against Fascism.

(6) I think the attitude of the unions towards the proposals for a united front against Fascism and War should be completely in agreement. Efforts should be made to get each branch of the unions to agree to accept the United Front policy and to operate it locally by coming into united front committees.

As an example, the Lanarkshire Miners' Union have instructed each branch to refuse to have anything to do with united front activity. But the Larkhall and District United Front Committee made an approach to Consilloch L.M.U. branch and conducted an agitation in the village where the branch operates. The result was that when the branch met to discuss the United Front proposals the members accepted them. This not only strengthens the fight for unity, but it also strengthens the fight for trade union democracy and weakens the reactionary trade union leaders, for it is winning trade union members to a revolutionary policy.

WM. PEARSON (*Checkweighman, Broomfield Pit, E.C. Member United Mineworkers' Union, Workmen's Pit Inspector*).

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From a Branch of the Clerks' Union

You speak about "Trade Union Policy," but the real trouble about Trade Unionism at the moment is that it has no clear and coherent policy at all. Particular unions and particular leaders may be said to have something resembling a a policy, but for the movement as a whole there is nothing but a mass of uncoordinated and frequently contradictory ideas. The Trades Union Congress in a vague sort of way speaks for the movement, but as few of its delegates are democratically instructed by the rank and file no one knows whether they represent their views or not. You quote, for example, the personal opinion of Mr. A. Conley about the desirability of coordinating wage demands, but it is difficult to know how far this idea is generally understood and favoured among trade unionists, simply because it has not been systematically discussed and decided about among the rank and file. In my trade union branch, for example, the question has never been submitted to us by our Executive nor among my fairly extensive acquaintance with fellow trade unionists do I know of a trade union branch where it has. Personally I think the idea is a sound one in principle, but it is bound to be utterly futile in practice unless it is preceded by :

(1) a clearer understanding of the present economic and political situation ;

(2) a more effective organisation among the workers.

The first is bound to reveal the fact that in many industries no wage improvement is possible on the present profit making basis, and therefore it is ridiculous at one and the same time to preach a policy of wage improvement and a policy of collaboration with the employers to keep capitalist industry going. It is equally stupid to expect success in any universal wage advance movement so long as the workers are either ill-organised in overlapping and competing unions, or not organised at all. These two vital points are connected with one another. The workers are at present confused by the muddle in the trade union movement. There is no clear cut trade union policy pointing to the Socialist way out of the present chaos, nor is there for every worker one definite trade union to which he ought to belong and which is eagerly seeking his membership.

Some part of this confusion has been contributed by the past separatist and merely abusive policy of the Communist Party, which has naturally brought reprisals from the official leaders of the trade unions. In the present critical state of the world, all these partisan manœuvres and counter-attacks ought to cease. For that reason I deeply regret the recent circular of the T.U.C. seeking to deprive trade unions of their democratic right to select delegates of their own choice, and I am glad to learn that so many trade union branches and Trades Councils have refused to accept this attempted dictatorial invasion of their rights. At the same time it is obvious that the co-existence of conflicting parties is confusing to the rank and file and hampering to the real unity and discipline of the movement. If, therefore, the official restrictions were removed, it would best serve the interests of the workers if Communists and members of the I.L.P. merged their separate and competing efforts in the common task of democratising the trade union movement from within and promoting the adoption of a more adequate policy to meet the needs of to-day. Undoubtedly considerably faster progress towards this end would be made if the Communist Trade Union International linked up with the official Trade Union International. Anyone, on either side, who stands in the way of unity, is no true friend of the workers.

The complexities of each industry make it difficult to lay down a common line of action with regard to wage improvement, but undoubtedly the general adoption of the workplace as the basis of organisation in a broad industrial union would greatly strengthen the trade unions in membership and industrial power. So also would greater understanding and unity between manual and non-manual

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workers. The improvement of the standard of life of the workers, and even the maintenance of their present liberties and conditions are in my opinion entirely bound up in these four factors :

(1) clear recognition by the Trade Union movement that the early attainment of Socialism offers its only hope ;

(2) consequent abandonment of attempts by collaboration with big employers to give capitalist control of industry any further temporary lease of life ;

(3) securing of greater degree of working-class solidarity by intensive working-class education and improved organisation (including workplace branches, industrial amalgamation and unity between manual and non-manual workers) ;

(4) co-ordination of working-class power (industrial, political and co-operative), under definite Socialist leadership.

Poplar Public Services Branch, National Union of Clerks ; *J. H. Lloyd* (*Chairman*).

From a National Committee Member

It would certainly be a correct and tremendous forward move if trade union forces were co-ordinated in an increased wages demand as suggested by the T.U.C. General Council. It is equally certain that this body of over-paid misleaders has no intention of transforming its pious expression into action, unless compelled by mass pressure, indeed their present policy of sympathising with the employer's supposed difficulties makes it logically impossible for them to obtain real higher wages fron a capitalism that is already bemoaning its impoverishment so far as working class needs are concerned.

Militant trade unionists must open their mates' eyes to the foolishness of suffering poverty in the midst of plenty and educate, agitate, and orgainse them round demands and methods that will appeal to their mass sense, call the bluff of their officials, and smash capitalism.

I consider the trade union movement to-day, should propagate and lead the demand for an all-minimum weekly wage of 65s. ; a 40 hour, or 5 day, week, and a good pension rate at 60 with full social benefits free. This should be allied to unemployment demands of £1 weekly minimum with free social benefits, etc., the abolition of Labour Camps ; work at trade union rates and the repeal of the Trades Disputes, and Unemployment, Acts. These demands should be continuously fought for on all jobs, election programmes, labour exchanges, trade union branches, Trades Councils, etc. Joined to the greater issues of fascism and war they should form the basis of the United Front of all workers, which I heartily favour, and which in action by its sheer numbers and grip on the industrial and social life of the nation could smash capitalism, anytime it cares to move into action, with the trade unions as its vital machine and given the revolutionary outlook which I am sure, although not a member, only the Communist Party can give.

Where individual trade union demands for increased wages are now tabled, all elements particularly rank-and-file movements, should mutually assist each other by press propaganda, publicity and information. We should link up by area, town, Trades Council and national meetings and, if possible, have a final National Delegate Conference on our all-in programme (prior to the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference), from which we could formulate and carry the fight right into these strongholds of reaction. Where possible we should hold factory meetings and proceed to the establishment of rank-and-file works' committees with shop stewards, and the continuous advocacy of 100 per cent. unionism.

The " Black Circular " is a deliberate attempt by the well-paid trade union officials to sabotage real trade union activity, to protect their cushy jobs by removing the militants and to subject us

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to a passive acceptance of bad conditions. It is also a reflection of their fear and a justification of Communist allegations that higher Labour leaders are the people who assist fascism to power, for if carried, this circular would break trade unionism. We should vote it down and counter it by demanding in our unions that all officials be annually elected by a secret individual ballot vote, on a working class political and industrial programme laid down by members, and that no official shall draw more than a wage, pro tem., of £4 weekly, or the same as his membership, and that it shall rise and fall in accordance with theirs.

Militants should contest all elections and delegations, familiarise themselves with union agreements and rules, and the conducting of businesslike meetings.

Insofar as rationalisation eliminates competitive chaos, brings large bodies of industrial workers together, and so makes it easier for the workers later to proceed with socialist reconstruction, we should support it. But we should counter its present effects of higher profits and unemployment by fighting for higher wages, less hours, and better conditions.

To counter fascism's growth we should endeavour to build industrial anti-fascist movements and give all support to those existing like the Printers', for although fascism largely advances by political humbug it can never succeed against a working class movement based on industry and ready to starve it out of existence. To aid our fight we should popularise and buy rank-and-file papers, LABOUR MONTHLY, etc., and above all, that steadfast working-class champion, the *Daily Worker*.

I am no Labour Party baiter but the whole record of their leadership since the war forces intelligent people to the conclusion that all over the world it is these overpaid political humbugs, who by their consistent collaboration with the employing-class, are holding back from the workers the full fruits of their labour. We may not yet accept the revolutionary way-out of the Communists or join their party, but no one can deny their honesty and courage in leading the daily struggle for better conditions and peace. Then we have this much in common with them so let us workers in all industries get together with them, and regardless of our peace-at-any-price present leadership, go forward now for a good living in our time and not in the great hereafter. It's the quickest, surest, and only decent way forward for men.

G. FINLAYSON (*District Committee-member and District Delegate to Management Committee, National Union of Waterworks Employees*).

From an Engineers' Branch Assistant Secretary

(1) In reference to the demands being put forward by certain trade unions for increased wages, it should be possible for many more to go forward on this particular issue in view of the demand also for the shorter working week. Further, steps should be taken to decrease the number of trade unions that cater for a particular industry. The employers see the need for this in their particular associations, viz., The Optical Manufacturers' Association is practically non-existent: they have become part of the Engineering Employers' Association. This is one instance.

(2) Linking up of local trade union forces in reference to wages, shorter working week, Unemployment Act, making the local Trades Councils function in this direction. The demands of active trade unionists should be on the lines of industrial unions. Formation of powerful factory committees embracing all the workers with a view to popularising the demands being put forward and to go forward to attain a 100 per cent. trade union membership wherever possible.

(3) Of course I am against the Black Circular, and so is my branch which received a copy from Deptford and Greenwich Trades Council, to which I am one of the delegates. My branch has replied to the effect that they have the right to send what delegates they think fit and have

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twice endorsed my nomination. The result is that the branch is not at present fully represented at the Trades Council. Its operation in any union would retard the progress of the building up of any union, and in the demands being put forward.

(4) The unions should strengthen their own forces to cope with this position and to improve the position of the workers in the industries affected by rationalisation.

(5) Take part in every demonstration against Fascism, bring as many workers as possible into the trade unions, point out the dangers involved by lectures, etc., literature and other means.

(6) The aim of the unions being the control of industry, they should be in favour of a United Front against Fascism and War and should put forward their demands to the local Labour Party and mandate their delegates accordingly, This action will also strengthen the demands going forward *re* wages, etc.

PET. PALMER (*Assistant Secretary, Deptford No. 2 Branch, Amalgamated Engineering Union*).

[Previous contributions to this discussion will be found in the April issue, pp. 244-248, from *R. G. L. Bowyer* (Labour Councillor: President, Chemical Workers' Union); *R. Beamish* (Chairman, Abercrave Lodge, South Wales Miners' Federation: Vice-Chairman Abercrave and Ystradgynlais Trades and Labour Council; E.C. member, Anthracite Combine Committee); *H. Holt* (Secretary, Ardsley Branch Locomotive Engineers and Firemen); *R. Pigford* (Delegate, Ryhope Lodge, Durham Miners' Association). In the May issue, pp. 307-11, from *N. Walkington* (President, Leeds No. 1 Branch, Patternmakers' Association: Delegate to Leeds Trades Council); *W. H. Bennett* (President, Tilmanstone Branch, Kent Mineworkers' Association: Secretary, Dover and District Trades Council, Prospective Labour Candidate for Dover); *S. Tutill* (Yorkshire Miners' Association); and *J. F. Watson* (Chairman, Hetton Lodge, Durham Miners' Association).]

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THE SECOND LABOUR MONTHLY UNITED FRONT CONFERENCE

I. INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS

THE Second LABOUR MONTHLY Delegate Conference for the United Front against Fascism and War, held in the Conway Hall on May 11, proved an even more signal success than the first Conference in January, both in regard to numbers and in regard to the workmanlike nature of the discussion. In view of the changing situation this Conference was particularly devoted towards the discussion of the various questions on war now being raised on all sides. The discussion, together with the widely representative character of the delegates, proved that this Second Conference also, had provided an important means of reflecting and clarifying the complicated issues of the fight against war and showed, as one delegate after another asserted, that a united front of the whole working class was the only effective method of fighting war.

The composition of the Conference, according to the final complete Report, showed that there were 172 organisations represented by 311 delegates, with the addition of 63 visitors.

The main groupings were as follows: Trade Union organisations, 114 delegates; Co-operative, 69; Labour Party organisations, 33; United Front bodies, 26; Independent Labour Party, 10; Communist Party, 22. There were 50 delegates from women's organisations, and 29 from Youth organisations.

	No. of organisations.	No. of delegates.
Trades Councils or Trades and Labour Councils ..	4	6
Trade Union Bodies (from 21 trade unions, including 1 National E.C. and 3 District Committees, also from one Shop Stewards Committee)	54	106
Local Labour Parties or Ward Committees	9	16
Labour League of Youth	8	17
Co-operative Organisations (3 Political Councils, 2 Co-op. Party Branches, 1 Woodcraft Folk, 2 Comrade Circles, 36 Guilds)	44	69
Socialist League	3	7
Independent Labour Party and Guild of Youth ..	6	10
Communist Party and Young Communist League ..	15	22
Anti-Fascist, Anti-War and United Front Bodies ..	12	26
Student Societies	2	3
Other Labour, Socialist and Cultural Organisations ..	14	27
	172	311

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Twenty-two speakers took part in the discussion, speaking on behalf of practically all sections of the movement represented, the Trade Unions, Labour Parties, Co-operatives, I.L.P., Communist Party, and the United Front bodies.

The most encouraging feature of the Conference was the proof it provided of the new forces especially from the Trade Unions and the Co-operatives, that are coming forward to take part in the building of the United Front, and this in face of the increasing attempts being made to prevent any contact with the more militant sections of the movement.

Mrs. Manning in her opening speech gave the lead to the Conference by suggesting that to-day, if ever, the danger of war had become real enough for the T.U.C. to call the special Conference against War they had agreed to do in such an eventuality.

D. N. Pritt at the outset of his speech declared :

> I come here as a loyal member of the Labour Party, as I dare say a great many delegates from local Labour organisations and similar bodies also come, but I claim my right to work within the Labour Party for a reversal of a great many of the tendencies that have recently developed in the Labour Party. And I claim that right because I think it is of the greatest importance to everybody in this country who desires to see either socialism or peace.

Throughout the Conference which, though rather uncertain and abstract in the first part became in the second half more practical and useful, clarifying the questions raised, this statement of Comrade Pritt was echoed by other Labour Party and Trade Union speakers.

Especially were the delegates' replies uncertain at first to a number of hypothetical ways which were brought forward, in which the workers might be confronted by war. It must be stated as an achievement of the Conference that it was possible for Pritt himself to claim in replying to the discussion that he agreed with the assertions at the Conference that they should be against any war whatever if organised by capitalist governments. This view finally found expression in the resolution which is given at the end of the report.

During the discussion, and especially in the second half, many practical suggestions were made and experiences recounted such as how munition loading was being hindered if not actually being stopped at the docks (by Comrade Dinmore), or how militants were able in spite of all obstacles to get elected to National Conferences (by Comrade Papworth).

Mrs. Leah Manning in closing the Conference claimed that many in the Labour Party were desirous of remaining there since as they believed " our most useful work not only for the Labour Party, but also for the whole working-class movement can be done " if this was so, and they *could* do this if " we feel we have the workers behind us." It was for the delegates, she said, to go back and see that this was achieved.

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II. REPORT OF CONFERENCE

Mrs. Leah Manning (prospective Labour Candidate for Sunderland), in opening the Conference from the Chair, recalled how this second Conference was the outcome of the very successful first Conference against War and Fascism, held on January 26, in the Kingsway Hall.[1] At that Conference and since, Mrs. Manning stated, delegates had not been entirely satisfied owing to the fact they were expecting instructions to be drawn up at that Conference to meet the menace of fascism and war. In the interval the MONTHLY has consulted with representative delegates to meet this, and the political resolution with the memorandum on organisational steps[2] were before the Conference for discussion. Mrs. Manning claimed that if January was an important time to discuss how to continue the fight against fascism, to-day is much more important as since events have moved more quickly than any of us either anticipated or dared to prophesy, as far as the war position in Europe is concerned. The time has now come when we have to discuss a very much more positive attitude towards the war menace. In view of the fact that the war danger has suddenly become a real one we would have liked to see the T.U.C. summon the Conference which it promised it would if such became the case. Unless the trade union and working-class movement in this country discusses this situation we shall find ourselves in the same position as in 1914, without a clear plan or knowledge of what we ought or intended to do and liable once more to be swept off our feet by a flood of emotion.

Mrs. Manning mentioned that the LABOUR MONTHLY had received a number of letters from individuals and organisations regretting their inability to be present, but wishing the Conference success, for example, from John Bromley, the General Secretary of Associated Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, and from a number of Trades and Labour Councils, etc., in the outlying districts of the London area.

Mrs. Manning then read the following letter from the Editor of the LABOUR MONTHLY, **R. Palme Dutt :**

Despite all opposition the united front is advancing in strength and power and mass support. But the measures of the enemy, the preparation for war on the working class and for a new world war, are advancing even more rapidly.

The provisional January Delegate Conference revealed the strength of the demand for the united front from the representatives of the local working-class organisations who had come together. But shortness of time prevented the reaching of definite resolutions and the hammering out of the practical problems of the united front. Some differences of view were revealed which were not fully cleared. At this Conference we need to reach full clearness and a common agreed line on the practical tasks of the fight for the united front in the next stage. For this purpose the draft resolution and memorandum have been prepared and are presented for discussion.

What is our aim ? To win as rapidly as possible the main body of the workers and of the working-class organisations, political, trade union and co-operative, into one common front and common struggle against the menace which threatens equally and without distinction all workers and all working-class organisations.

How shall we achieve this aim ? Only to the extent that we carry the fight back from this Conference into the localities and into the working-class organisations to win support on every side for the policy of the united front.

Shall we achieve this aim by setting up some new fixed organisation or so-called united front body from this Conference ? No ; this is to misunderstand the meaning of the united front. The present conference is representative of a pioneering minority, whose task is to win the majority, not to isolate themselves. There exist too many limited separate organisations already ; to add to their number is to add to the confusion, not to achieve unity. The fight of every delegate here is in the wider movement and in the masses of workers to win support for the united front.

The Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference meet in a few months' time, and will be faced with the demand for the united front, for the fight against fascism and war, for the reversal of the policy of support of imperialist war, and for the reversal of the policy of disciplinary exclusions and disruption. We need to exert all our forces to strengthen

[1] For detailed report see the March issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY. Single copies of this issue can be obtained for 7d. post free from The Manager, The LABOUR MONTHLY, 7 John Street, W.C.1.

[2] This Resolution and Memorandum, as adopted by the Conference, are given at the end of this report.

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this fight, both in the appointment of delegates and in pressure on delegates already appointed, that this demand shall be strongly voiced at these conferences and at every working-class conference in the coming period. If every delegate here exerts all the influence he can, and wins others to do the same, we can achieve big results ; for the mass of the workers, and even an important proportion of the lower official ranks, are already sympathetic to the united front ; and a straight ballot of the working-class movement at the present moment would undoubtedly show an overwhelming majority for the united front.

In the localities the united front is growing, is gaining strength and experience in successive struggles. If we put all our weight into carrying this forward all over the country we can make the united front a reality which no disruptive measure can break.

We need to hold before us the final aim of an All-In United Front Congress of all working-class organisations, of the Labour Party, of the Trades Union Congress, of the Co-operative Movement, of the Independent Labour Party, of the Communist Party, of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, of the women's organisations, of the youth and cultural organisations, and of the local united front movements, which shall build up the all-powerful United Front throughout Britain to meet the coming struggles. Nothing less than this must be the aim of the fight for the United Front. Our Conference needs to mark a stage in the clear and conscious fight of all militant workers, socialists, trade unionists or co-operators, whatever their political tendency for this common aim.

With greetings to the Conference and all wishes for its success.

I would like to say at the outset, declared **D. N. Pritt, K.C.,** in his opening speech, that I come here as a loyal member of the Labour Party, as I dare say a great many delegates from local Labour organisations and similar bodies also come, but I claim my right to work within the Labour Party for a reversal of a great many of the tendencies that have recently developed in the Labour Party. And I claim that right, because I think it is of the greatest importance to everybody in this country who desires to see either socialism or peace.

Everyone should realise by now that only the working class can prevent war, as of course, when we do have a war it is the working class that is expected to carry it out ; and if it is to be prevented it is again the working class who will have to bear the brunt, the suspicion, hostility, loss of wages, imprisonment and anything else that can be thought of as treatment of people who do not become immediately hysterical when they see their great political leaders trying to make them support the war. The middle class will not suffer so much before or after the war ; therefore if the working class wanted any additional encouragement to avoid it, bad as their position might be, it will be a good deal worse if the war actually comes and they have to take part in it.

The problems before the working class divide themselves into long range problems and short range problems. The long range problem is to establish socialism in one country after another, and it will no doubt become easier to establish it in the third country than in the second and still easier to establish it in the fourth and the fifth, and so on. But this is quite simple—the problem is to establish Socialism—a Socialist World Commonwealth—which will make war impossible if it is a complete one, and if a partial one, will make war gradually less and less likely. What we can do now to make war more difficult and peace more likely comprise the short range problems, but both long and short range problems should always be borne in mind.

The National Government is at present unable to make up their minds whether they will back France against Hitler or whether they will back Hitler, in order to save the English debts in Germany, and at the same time try to stave off the danger of Hitler biting them by suggesting to him that the Soviet Union provides some nice juicy bones to bite. Unfortunately the bones in the Soviet Union belong to a very remarkable physique, which might object.

We do not want to make the mistakes of past years, and not be fully ready long before war breaks. The first thing we have to do is to make up our minds what the date, so to speak, is now if we can. Using the metaphor of 1913 and 1914, are we now in October, 1913, or in May, 1914, or June, 1914, or are we in the latter part of July ? It is impossible to say exactly. But the lesson of it, of course, is that if anything is to be done—and something must be done—it must be ready long before the war is ready to break out. Some may say that the Trades Union Congress ought to have taken action ; others that they should be ready to act. I think the Trades Union Congress ought to move at once.

A great many people say : " We know what the policy of the British Government is with regard to a purely defensive war, but what is the policy of the Labour Party and the Socialist Organisations generally to a purely defensive war against a purely

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aggressor ? " My own view is that, if you tell the British Government that you will stand behind them in a purely defensive war, they will be sure to tell you, when they discover themselves driven by some big industrial interest into running the risk of war to prevent the loss of a market or colony—that it is a purely defensive war, that it is a war to end both this war and the next one, and you will find yourselves in just the same mess as in 1914. But some of you may think—I am rather disposed, I think, to think so myself—that if you are faced at any rate with the comparatively simple problem of one capitalist country making war against another, it does not really matter to any of the people about whom you and I care which of the two sides purports to win or lose the war. And then further, of course, we are asked, surely we would fight in favour of democracy. If you could show me a bit of it, I will consider it seriously ! And then we are asked would we fight in defence of the Soviet. I am almost tempted to say I will consider that when there is the slightest chance of our being allowed to do so. But I would be very interested to hear people tell me what their view is. Probably even there we might have to hesitate for a very long time before we supported what we were told was a war in favour of the Soviet. Then, of course, our attention is drawn to the fact that the Soviet is strongly armed and why shouldn't England be ? If the political constitution and organisations of the two countries were the same, I could follow this argument. But they are not.

Then it is asked, surely we would fight against Hitler ? Of course that is the same as a great many other problems. If a capitalist war between capitalist England and capitalist Germany is to be dished up by those lovers of working-class freedom and equality, Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald, as a fight to stamp out Fascism, my only fear is that there will be enough people to believe it. You may be sure it will be much like all other capitalist wars. A remoter question : would not we be prepared to fight in defence of a Socialist England ? I would be cheerfully shot on the barricades, old coward that I am, for a Socialist England, when we have one.

In conclusion Pritt declared that he wanted to hear the views of typical delegates of the Labour Parties, Trade Unions, and, above all, of the Co-operative Movement, as well as of the Communist Party and the I.L.P. on the broad and general question, and on the specific and difficult problems.

J. Gaster (London Divisional Council, I.L.P.), was the first speaker in the discussion. He declared on behalf of his Party that they would certainly support the Political resolution as drafted. He asked whether in view of the fact that because in certain circumstances we may wish to use the resources of this country in the defence of the Soviet, we in any way were to let up in our fight against war ? The answer, he said, was No. We must not only defend, but explain, the peace policy of the Soviet Union. We must show how the Soviet Union has successfully used her diplomatic position as well as her position in relation to the working-class movement of the world to carry on the fight for peace, first by driving wedges between the capitalist governments that oppose her, and secondly, by her assistance in the development of the working-class movement throughout the world. Here he pointed out that the statements made by McGovern at the Derby I.L.P. Conference did not speak the mind of the majority of the members of the I.L.P. There had been a lot of misrepresentation about this, and we will certainly not allow it to go unchallenged or unrepudiated.

E. Shearer (Jordans and Seer Green Labour Party) stated, In reference to Pritt's claim to attend the Conference as a loyal member of the Labour Party, it must be clear that this loyalty does not necessarily mean an uncritical acceptance of everything that is said at E.C. meetings at Transport House, or of decisions and policy which conflict with the fundamental principles of Socialism, which, if carried out, might mean the entire wiping out of the whole working class movement and all the gains that the working-class movement has achieved after years of sacrifice. For there is one loyalty that is far more important than loyalty to any particular party, and that is loyalty to the working class.

All of us as members of the Labour Party and the trade unions, should not only work to get these organisations to understand the different points of view, but get them into the common struggle. It is our duty to go away from this Conference and bring whatever pressure we can inside our organisations in favour of the united front against fascism and war.

M. Rosenfield (Committee against Malnutrition) pointed out how the Medical Research Council had organised itself, as it were, as a War Department, most of the Council being actually members of various war preparatory organisations. He claimed that it was necessary to get the doctors into the united front with the nurses and other professional people.

Alex Gossip (E.C., Nat. Furnishing Trades Association), declared that he could say unhesitatingly that he would

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have the greatest support from his E.C. for the resolutions and for the purpose of this meeting.

Why shouldn't we use the weapon of the General Strike in order to put fear into the governing class? Both the Labour Party and the T.U.C. in days gone past passed resolutions to that effect. Comrade Gossip then said recently he wrote to Citrine on behalf of his Union asking them to convene the conference they had agreed to convene at the previous T.U.C. on war, for he agreed with Pritt that the time was now ripe. To this letter, after some delay, he got a reply that they were considering it. He referred to the fact that one of their mildest branches had passed a resolution denouncing the Government for the attitude they had taken towards the recent aircraft strike. Then, amid applause from the Conference, he claimed that the enthusiasm which led to the hold-up of the Jolly George in 1920 to prevent war on Russia could be aroused again. Munition workers can do their share if it is put before them in the right way. The weapon of the strike, in spite of the fears and tremblings that the word now has for members of the T.U.C., I advocate with all the power I have at my disposal so that this and all other weapons may be taken up to prevent a repetition of the damnable affair of 1914-18.

Cecil Dixon (Friends' Anti-War Group) confessed that he considered it was a fact that if the present Government took us into a war within the next month the masses of the working class would rush into that war whole-heartedly and would to a very large extent treat as traitors those who put forward the idea of the general strike. Comrade Dixon said that if it was a fact that the existence of the British Empire means that the ordinary worker enjoys a higher standard of life it is plain they are going to defend the benefit they have got in the absence of something much more powerful and forceful, held before them. He maintained that while the mass of this country remain ignorant of the present position and the way it can be improved they will only be roused when their condition becomes really desperate. They will then only struggle for immediate objects, and if realised then they will drop the struggle. He maintained that a General Strike is not an instrument for stopping war, it is just revolution. You must first start with a considerable mass, if not the majority, of the people already converted to Socialism. If that is done then the problem of stopping war and getting the Socialist Commonwealth is solved.

I. Corio (Italian Anti-Fascist Movement) made an appeal on behalf of 300 internees in Italy, formerly political prisoners, who, though having served their sentences, had been called upon to swear allegiance to Fascism as a condition for their complete release. (The Conference subsequently unanimously passed a resolution of protest; see below.)

J. Pole (Finchley Divisional Labour Party) considered that all the various questions on war put by Pritt and Gaster could only have one answer, that is, we will not fight. Addressing himself specially to the Labour Party members present, he considered that they should call upon the Labour Party to declare, supposing they were called upon to form a Government, that in no circumstances would they carry out the war contracts for aeroplanes, battleships, etc., entered upon by the present National Government.

C. Crawley (Harrow Branch, Amalgamated Engineering Union) after pointing out that while the capitalist countries are ready to cut one another's throats but to use the working class to do the job for them, he personally was prepared to use any possible means within his power whether it is the strike or anything else to stop it. It is no good waiting till the time comes for then it is too late; that is why we ask you to form the United Front.

D. F. Speight (Cambridge University Socialist Society) pointed out how in the preparation of a pamphlet on Cambridge University and War they had been able to draw into a united action the University Labour Club, the Anti-War Movement, the Socialist Society and the University Friends' Society, and this pamphlet had been the means of drawing in people who otherwise would not have anything to do with the united front.

J. W. Turner (Earlsfield Co-operative Men's Guild) said he disagreed with Comrade Dixon in his contention that we must convert the majority to Socialism first: it was similar to the oft repeated statement that we must all be of the same mind before we can avoid war. First of all, after suggesting that all present were agreed that war was in the capitalist system while peace was in the socialist system, he recommended the following things could be done in every area; firstly, to work in our trade union branches, etc., for the reversal of the Labour and T.U.C. decisions against the General Strike. If the Government knew that there would be a strong General Strike on the outbreak of war, there would be no war. In view of the fact that there are all sorts of barriers put up against the development of the United Front on war and on every other question, we must find a way of uniting

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the workers locally. For example, on rents they had been able to fight successfully for a reduction which had the effect of drawing together a large number of workers, for no one could say that it was not in the best interests of the workers to prevent the fleecing and robbery of landlordism. We must take up every grievance of the workers, however insignificant it may seem, to draw all sections together on local issues, and so also on the menace of war.

Alf. F. Dinmore (1/18 Branch, Docks Section, Transport and General Workers' Union) said: once armaments came down day after day for every ship that came into the East and South Dock. But owing to the activities of an observation committee, several of them had formed, who, whenever any one of them found anything suspicious used to call up the whole committee and get into touch with the stevedores on the ship with the result that the armaments never went aboard, they changed their tactics and had to take them from one dock to another. Don't think that the Jolly George was the only instance. If they had to do that in order to try to get it away from the eyes of those who were opposed to war, with the expense it is costing them to do it, that shows to me quite clearly that they are a damn sight more afraid of us then we are of them. We have nothing to fear; the only thing we want is for all those who say they are against fascism and war to exert themselves and show they are prepared to do it in face of all consequences.

D. J. Cole (Rank and File Movement, Trams Section, Transport and General Workers' Union) said that he had come to realise that when the situation arises of a general strike, by just merely standing by and leaving off work it is not the end at all, and that the fight was actually really commencing. 1926 proved that the working class can be organised and can be led. We never had then such excuses as why should you ask us to stop when so-and-so is making so-and-so; in 1926 millions were prepared to stop for the miners, and they will stop, and the women will be with us, on this occasion. The question is to organise the militant elements; never mind what colour or what clothes they wear, so long as they are militants and against war and fascism; then get organisations going in the localities, linked up nationally, then all linked up internationally. There is no need for despondency. We will go on and we will be bound to win with unity.

A. E. Wise (Printers' Anti-Fascist Movement) considered that industrial action was the great weapon which they could and must use against war. Quite true, it is no good waiting till war is upon us; we have got to say here and now that we workers in the event of war are determined to do all we can in opposition to it, whatever pretext they may put forward. The repudiation of the General Strike gave in effect a free hand to the Government to go on with its war measures, on the grounds that it would be a defensive war. Comrade Wise recalled the resolution of the London Trades Council in the November 7, 1914, Trafalgar Square Demonstration at which a resolution was passed in favour of a voluntary system of service as against conscription, "in order," as the resolution asserted, "to carry the war through to a successful issue." That was the way things went in 1914. Is it to be repeated? We have got to decide definitely what is to be our attitude towards war, whatever the pretext they may put forward. We must say that we take no part in any war that this or any other government may make.

Mrs. Stonham (Central Anti-War Group) speaking not as a delegate, though a member of this Anti-War Group, of the Labour Party, of a trade union and of a Co-operative Guild, considered that the Labour Parties were in a very muddled position as to the war policy of their leaders. Many rank and file are very much opposed to war, but as one must belong to an organisation where the mass of the workers are organised, she recommended all present to belong to the Labour Party or some similar organisation. For it is necessary to get the Labour, Trade Union and Co-operative Movement to call together that National Council of Labour to review their attitude. It won't be in time unless it is done soon. With regard to this organisation of gas drill, she wanted to know whether one should organise resistance to refuse to be pushed into it, or whether we could not use this to make some sort of organised protest by taking part and taking our literature and banners with us; she thought this latter would present a good opportunity of getting our message to the people with whom we do not normally come into contact. She considered further that a very strong movement in the Co-operative Guilds could be organised to pledge themselves to refuse to have anything to do with munition-making.

R. Page Arnot (LABOUR MONTHLY Editorial Board) suggested that the situation was very dangerous, especially because in the last six months the preparations for war had gone ahead more quickly than the preparations against it. We must see that the opposite is done. Everything is being used, including the Jubilee.

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To-day the Government is trying to arouse the discussion in the working-class movement as to what to do in the case of war, which in 1914 took place *after* the war began, this time before and so get it settled that it will be safe to begin. They are raising all the trick questions brought up in 1914-18 :—" If a German attacked your mother, if Hitler were to invade this country, if the British Government along with the Soviet Union were engaged in a war "—Believe me that once these " ifs " and " ands " are allowed to creep into the Labour Movement then we are lost. The fight against war is an old question. It was brought forward in 1907 at Stuttgart, in 1910 at Copenhagen, and at Basle in 1912. At each of these International Socialist Congresses a war resolution was carried again and again, varying many of its paragraphs to meet the situation. But there was one operative clause repeated which laid down the duty of the working class :—if war threatens then it is the duty of the working class to do everything it can to stop it. Secondly, if war breaks out in spite of this then it is their duty to oppose it unconditionally. Thirdly, it is the duty of all socialists of the whole working class in each country to use the crisis created by the war to bring about the downfall of capitalism. That was the policy of socialism 25 to 30 years ago. We must learn from these experiences and from Lenin's further work of clarification.

We have got to make it clear that *our* Government is the one to be attacked for its war policy. We have to tear away the web of lies that is woven across the face of the people, lies telling them that our Government does not want war. Is this being done ? Are the Labour leaders doing it ? I believe on the contrary they are backing the Government in the main. The whole attitude towards Nazi Germany, towards the Foreign Office policy, which is one of backing the two most war-mongering governments in the world—Germany and Japan—as expressed in the *Daily Herald* is extremely serious. A terrible statement was made recently, terrible because made by the man who was one of the leading three or four figures in the Socialist Party of Germany, Rudolph Hilferding, already quoted on pp. 338-9 of the Notes of the Month.

This is a grave and serious charge to be made against the leaders of the Labour Party. I say that it is the business of all Labour Party members here to work their utmost for the reversal of the Southport policy and of the whole *Daily Herald* policy in the last six months. Secondly, it is the business of all of us to build this united working-class front, the only thing that can stem the advance of war. I know many people feel that they want to know exactly what to do. But unless there is complete clearness as to policy, both now and still more if another 1914 comes, we shall go down.

A. J. Rosenbloom (Bethnal Green Branch, Independent Labour Party) There has been shown in the past a tremendous feeling of opposition to war, and it is up to us to see that this opposition is organised to make war in the service of capitalism impossible.

Comrade Dixon, he said, was wrong in trying to separate the immediate struggle from the fight for Socialim We cannot teach people Socialism unless at the same time you are getting them to take part in their immediate struggles. We have to be everywhere where the working class is.

Mrs. Waddington (E.C. British Movement against War and Fascism) declared that about this fight against war she felt hot. It is a hard job, and nothing spectacular, in talking to people in the trams or in buses, etc., but it is the only way to rouse the great masses of the people. For the great majority of working women and men do not attend conferences, do not attend Labour Parties and Co-operative Guilds, but they live in our street—yours and mine. Go down your street and talk to Mrs. so-and-so about the League of Nations and she will tell you about some one else, and you can go along to her. This is the simple elementary way, but the only way to get at the great masses.

As a co-operative guildswoman and an old Labour Party woman, I want to say that the rank and file are ready for us ; everywhere you go there is discontent with the leadership.

A. F. Papworth (London Busmen's Rank-and-File Movement), after agreeing with the last speaker that even though it makes one unpopular this anti-war propaganda must be done, he declared that the only way to abolish war was to abolish capitalism. This could only be done by forming a united front of every section of the working class, the Co-operatives, the Labour Party and the Trade Union Movement. After declaring that he was proud to be able to come to the Conference knowing that he had the votes of 7,000 London busmen behind him, he referred to the fact that the Busmen's Rank-and-File Movement defeated the attempt to throw them out of the Union. One of his fellow delegates to the Conference, who had been expelled, had now been elected by a magnificent vote to the Union's Biennial Conference and is to-day secretary to the garage from which he was expelled. This was due to militant

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action which could be carried into all organisations.

S. Spevick (Chelsea Co-operative Political Council) said that in the Co-operatives, and as a Socialist League member, he found that while preaching against war and fascism there were a mass of workers altogether outside our organisations who have got to be won. Unless we build up our movement and get those masses of people into the trade union branches and the co-operatives who are not yet socialists, our fight against war and fascism will be ineffective. We also had to contend with those inside who were not socialists at all. We had much hard work to do in the building up of a united struggle of workers against war and fascism.

Councillor Stonham (Central Anti-War Group) after declaring that he had been at the two previous Bermondsey Anti-War Conferences, I believe, he said, that this Conference represents a very great advance on both of them, because I believe that we have shown a far greater unity of purpose than ever before. I believe this is because we are realising that the war situation is very imminent. In this position it is possible to discuss things and to change the policy of the Labour Party The thing we have got to alter as rapidly as possible is the policy of collective security because it involves the use of sanctions. The Labour Party says it is the only Party that stands for peace, but at the same time it is the only party which is pledged to go to war automatically. It means that the Nazis have only to go into Austria and we have to help the Austrian fascists. He believed that the collective security policy was good in 1931-32, but to-day the position had changed. Declaring that he did not agree with those of the left who accuse our leaders of being traitors he said while he believed they held a certain view in which he did not believe, they had a right to that view ; only we have to show them we don't believe it ; if the rank and file showed the leaders what they wanted the policy could be changed. We must not support war, he concluded, as war is capitalist war.

A. Ward (Negro Welfare Association) objected to the statement of a previous speaker to the effect that the British workers were better off because of the colonies. Just because Britain has colonies to secure, since Germany has no colonies but wants some of the British ones, because she wants a higher standard of living, and just as Japan also wants colonies for her people to migrate to, therefore you must get rid of your colonies. Without them you would have nothing to worry about.

The next speaker was **G. Allison** (London District Committee, Communist Party). Allison said, as representative of the District Committee of the C.P., he first of all wanted to pay a tribute to the LABOUR MONTHLY for their initiative in organising this Conference. I feel sure all LABOUR MONTHLY readers—and we hope they will increase very rapidly—will appreciate that the LABOUR MONTHLY is a power in the land because of its well written theoretical articles appearing month after month ; and to prove that it is not merely theoretical, to prove it is concerned with the actual struggle, I think this Conference is one of the best possible indications.

The government of British capitalism, the heart of the Empire, cannot be anything other than a war-mongering government, at the same time unless we do not correct the very first false step there is no possible retreat after that mistake is made. When our trade union leaders said they stood for class collaboration they went on from there to breaking strikes and so on to becoming an integral part of capitalist machinery. In precisely the same way, if we say we support some kind of capitalist war there is no retreat.

Therefore we must be absolutely clear that under no circumstances can we support any kind of war that is waged by British Imperialism. Even if circumstances force British Imperialism into going into war alongside the Soviet Union, this would not alter the fact that British Imperialism was waging a war to defend its Empire.

Undoubtedly the vast majority of the people stand for peace—churchmen, trade unionists, the co-ops., labour party people, communists—a mass desire for peace. It is our job to organise that mass desire for peace. It is our job to realise that the Mayor of Bermondsey, in taking that courageous and defiant stand against the massed forces of jingo imperialism, is striking a blow for peace, and this Conference ought to send him a letter along those lines. Despite all attempts to make the united front a fetish the united front is actually growing, arising out of the mass struggle itself. It is not merely a question of one or two individuals who see this thing more clearly than the others, but a mass surge. If the facts are made clear, mass action cannot be diverted. We must make it clear that the working class can stage the fight against war, and in the process can actually stage the war against capitalism, which is actually the cause of all wars.

D. N. Pritt then replied to the discussion :

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There is perhaps more reason for me to speak now than before. I am impressed by and agree with the assertions that have come from a good many comrades that the only safe way for working-class organisations in this country is to make up their minds and take their stand about not taking part in a war organised by capitalist governments, is to say that they won't take part in any war organised by capitalist governments. Once they make any hole in the wall by conceding any exceptions, not only will the people they are seeking to educate to socialism and anti-war spirit not understand, but the wall will fall down of itself. With regard to the general strike, Comrade Gossip said that I was very cautious about it. Of course I was, because I am a member of the middle class, and it is the working class who have to organise a general strike, and I am not one of those who are ready to lay down their youth when they are grown up, but I was very glad to hear Comrade Gossip put it forward and I did not agree with other people who say that it cannot be done. It is a long and difficult thing, but so long as it is organised sufficiently in advance, a general strike may actually operate and may be of very great value. Comrade Dixon, whose speech I admired very much in many ways, said that one must not rely on a general strike as a means of stopping war, but as a revolutionary move. That is as good as saying that a man cannot be an uncle because he is a nephew. He may very well be both. There is no reason why it should not be a move against war specifically as well as a revolutionary move generally. Why is a general strike against war or the idea of organising in advance against war useful? Firstly, because, of course, it may succeed. When a war actually breaks out it is possible that a general strike in one or more of the capitalist countries involved may actually bring it to an early end. What is much more important is that if you can convince a perceptible proportion of the people in actual control of any capitalist country that there is a real danger of a general strike if they really start a war, they won't start one, because every time a government has to consider whether it can put anything across wide sections of its people, it has to consult all the various channels of information it has got, to ask the simple question: Will they stand it? Will they stand the Jubilee? Will they stand gas masks? Will they stand Ramsay MacDonald? Will they stand our going for Hitler, or not going for Hitler? etc., etc. If you can once convince them that there really is a serious movement for a general strike against war you will have struck a very strong blow towards staving off any particular war or war situation at any particular moment, so long as you can keep up in the working class that attitude and convey the knowledge of that attitude to the governing classes.

With regard to the suggestion that it might be made clear that supplies will not be handled, created or moved in the event of war situations arising, that is the same thing as the general strike on a smaller scale, it is the same problem. I do not wholly agree with Comrade Dixon's speech, and I agree the most important thing is a general widened education of as many working-class people as you possibly can, and middle-class people too, into a broad united left wing socialism. That will go a very long way, beacuse every time you build up socialism you are helping to knock down war and of course creating a feeling in the governing classes that perhaps they won't be able to get the people behind them in a war.

With regard to Comrade Pole, I agree with him that we won't fight in any capitalist war, and he rather suggested that the questions I raised in my opening remarks did not exist. What he meant was that there was one clear answer to the whole lot, but it isn't quite so simple as that. These questions do exist in the minds of a great many people, and they are used to argue a great many socialists out of a very clear cut position, and it is as well for all of us to have a clear cut answer.

Do not let us be downhearted because everybody is mentally drunk this week. As somebody pointed out, they were not mentally drunk three weeks ago when they were dealing with the Peace Ballot, and they won't be mentally drunk in three week's time.

At this point the Standing Orders Committee of 5 appointed at the Commencement of the Conference made their final recommendations with regard to the amendments handed in to the resolution and memorandum, which after an amendment by the Conference were endorsed as follows:

POLITICAL RESOLUTION.

(*a*) Add at the end of subsection I. of par 7 the following, "against the attempt to enrol the population in the military preparations of anti-gas drill."

(*b*) After subsection II. of paragraph 7 add a new subsection as follows: "For the repeal of the Trades Disputes Act and the Incitement to Disaffection (the Sedition) Act."

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MEMORANDUM ON ORGANISATIONAL STEPS.

At the end of point 3 on p. 1, add a new sentence as follows: "To demand the summoning of the Special Trades Union Congress on War as laid down in the Standing Orders of the T.U.C."

Mrs Manning then put both the above resolution and the memorandum as amended to the Conference, and they were carried unanimously.

The Conference agreed to send a wire of solidarity with the Dublin Transport Workers in their struggle against the offensive of the Irish capitalists.

Lastly, the following resolution was carried on the Italian prisoners:

"This Conference expresses its admiration of the Italian political prisoners who, on the expiry of their long prison sentences, have refused to swear allegiance to Fascism as a condition of their release. We commend their stand and promise to help in all ways in the fight for their release."

Mrs. Leah Manning, in closing the Conference, said: You have had some excellent advice from Mrs. Waddington about the kind of things you can do on the spot. For instance, as she suggested to carry out point 8 in the Memorandum by writing to the B.B.C. to complain about the war nature of the broadcast of the Jubilee celebrations. You have had more excellent advice from other people about what you ought to do if a war situation arises. I want to give you one final word of advice. I am sure it must be apparent to all of you that there are many people at the present moment who are in a peculiarly delicate and difficult position. We have got to work for a reversal of many Southport decisions, and there are a great many of us who desire to stay in the Labour Party, who believe that our most useful work not only for the Labour Party, but for the whole working-class movement can be done if we do not throw away the great machinery of organisation which is there at our hand, and which we have helped to build up by our work and financial sacrifice for over a quarter of a century. I do not feel myself disposed to throw away either in Sunderland or nationally the opportunities for the advancement of the workers which the Labour Party affords. I do not desire to be pushed into that position, and there are many other people who feel the same way. But there is no reason why we should be forced into making a decision on this point if we feel we have the workers behind us.

And I am going to ask you here for the sake of all of us, and particularly for the strength of the working-class movement in this country, that you do your utmost between now and Brighton to see that the Southport decisions are reversed. You cannot do that just by going out of this Conference and sitting down. You have got to do some real hard propaganda work. The whole question of the trade union block vote was raised at our last conference, and we were told it was impossible to get the right delegates appointed. This is all bunk, comrades. If you have got to pay the fares out of your own pockets to send the right delegate, then you must do it. It is of the utmost importance for the success of the working-class movement that you see that the delegates to Brighton are instructed, and instructed along those lines which shall in the end mean the reversal of the decisions which at the moment are hampering us in the fight for working-class emancipation. This is the job you have got to do. It is not easy. It is not popular work, but I have never believed that the person who is popular with everybody is worth anything.

The discussion and also the suggestions have been good, but activity is what we want, and along these two lines I believe we shall reap a real harvest for the work that has been put into the organisations of this Conference.

A retiring collection of £3 5s. 5d. was made.

III. RESOLUTIONS

POLITICAL RESOLUTION.

This Conference of representatives of the working-class movement in the London area, comprising 311 delegates from 172 organisations, declares:

1. That the urgency of the need of the widest united action against fascism and war has increased since the January Conference.

2. This increased urgency is due above all to the extreme advance of the war danger. The war preparations of all the imperialist Powers are being multiplied at a lightning pace. German Fascism openly proclaims its aggressive aims, especially against the Soviet Union, and refuses the proposed Eastern Pact to keep peace in Eastern Europe. Japanese imperialism carries forward its offensive

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in the Far East. The primary responsibility for this situation rests with British imperialism, which has openly assisted and encouraged the military and aggressive plans of German Fascism, just as it connived at and assisted Japanese expansion in the Far East. The peace policy of the Soviet Union by skilfully utilising the contradictions of imperialism, works to delay the outbreak of war, and is followed with ardent sympathy by the workers of the whole world. But the final issue of war depends on the strength of the workers of the whole world, of the workers in the imperialist countries fighting in unity with the Soviet Union. Heavy responsibility falls on the British working class to develop agitation and action against the war plans of our own Government. This also means the responsibility of the workers to seek through their constituent bodies a reversal of that policy (adopted at the Labour Party Conference, the Trades Union Congress and at the Conference of the Co-operative Party) which lays on the Labour and Co-operative Movement obligation to support war if " in defence of democratic institutions " of capitalism, and " against an aggressor " (to be defined by capitalist governments), and which rejects the preparation of mass action and the policy of the General Strike against all capitalist wars.

3. The advance of Fascism is indissolubly bound up with the advance of War. German Fascism and Italian Fascism drive to war. Fascism is an integral part of war preparations. The Sedition Act in Britain is the counterpart of the increased armaments programme. Every measure to increase the power of the capitalist dictatorship, to diminish the already restricted liberties of working-class agitation and propaganda and organisation, as well as to restrict democracy in the working-class organisations, is a measure to hasten the advance to Fascism and to smooth the path of war organisation. The fight against Fascism is not only the fight against Mosley and his organisation, representing the fighting troops of the fascist offensive, but against the entire modern capitalist offensive in every field which everywhere is driving forward, through many varying routes, towards the objective of the fascist type of state.

4. The most successful and effective weapon against the offensive of Fascism and War is the united action of the whole working class. Unity in France routed the intense fascist assault of 1934 and brought down the Doumergue Government. The united action of the Spanish workers in arms threw into confusion the fascist offensive of 1934. Unity in Britain against the Unemployment Act and its Unemployment Board's new scales compelled the retreat of the National Government in February, 1935, and the suspension of the new scales, and, if carried forward, can compel the withdrawal of the Unemployment Act. This is the path which the working-class movement must follow, for unity on an all-in local, district and national basis against fascism, war and the capitalist offensive.

5. Without the establishment of unity on a still wider scale, having as its consequence the enlivening of backward sections of the working class, and bringing the middle class sections of the population closer to the workers, it will be impossible to defeat the National Government. Failure to develop and extend this unity in action cripples the struggle against the National Government, and its defeat. Such measures as the " Black Circular " are not merely an attack on the militant fighters in the Unions, they weaken the Unions themselves and, by further dividing the workers, they enable the National Government to press forward more effectively in its drive to Fascism and War.

This Conference appeals to all members of the Labour Party, the Co-operatives and the Unions to see in the firm establishment of a united front of all working-class organisations not a sectional manœuvre, not a policy aimed at disrupting the workers' ranks, but a policy which, wherever it has been applied (as on a national scale in France, as on a local scale in South Wales during the unemployed struggles), has brought substantial gains for the whole working class and beaten back the reactionary forces heading for Fascism and War. It asks all Labour Party and Co-operative members and members of Trade Unions to make a special effort within their organisations to ensure that at the next Trades Union Congress, Labour Party Conference and Conference of the Co-operative Party, the policy of opposition to the development of the United Front is decisively defeated.

6. The Conference pledges all delegates to carry on an active fight in their organisations and in their localities for the United Front against Fascism and War, to awaken all workers by ceaseless agitation to the menace of Fascism and War, to combat the propaganda of Imperialism and Fascism, to assist and carry forward every local and immediate struggle as a part of the advance of the United Front, and to ensure that the policy of united mass action against Fascism and War becomes the accepted policy of the Labour Party, the Co-operative Party and the T.U.C.

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7. In particular, the fight requires now to be carried forward

(i) against the armaments increase and foreign policy of the National Government ; against the attempt to enrol the population in the military preparation of anti-gas drill ;

(ii) for the withdrawal of the Unemployment Act ; for the repeal of the Trades Disputes Act and the Incitement to Disaffection (the Sedition) Act ;

(iii) for the withdrawal of the Black Circular ;

(iv) for the reversal of the war policy adopted at Southport, Weymouth and Glasgow ;

(v) for the organisation of the all-in united working-class front on a local, district and national scale.

MEMORANDUM ON ORGANISATIONAL STEPS.

The aim of the LABOUR MONTHLY Conference is to hasten the building of an all-embracing national United Front against Fascism and War. The United Front does not mean simply a surface move, or an electoral arrangement between political parties. It means the strength of the millions of the working class united under the one flag against capitalist barbarians. Every form of organisation existing in the working class must be brought into it.

This United Front can never be achieved by a few people coming together and dubbing themselves a United Front organisation. The United Front must be built where the fighting is going on, among the workers in their existing organisations and at their local centres. Each local branch of a Trade Union, each Co-operative Guild or other working-class organisation can appoint sub-committees for the special purpose of watching for every issue on which united action can be taken in their locality, deciding how to take it, and then seeing that it is taken and carried through. Trade Union branches, Co-operative Guilds and other organisations, through such anti-fascist sub-committees, can co-ordinate with one another and with the United Front activity of a whole district.

Above all, the organisation of the United Front has got to follow the line where the workers' daily life gives the conditions of permanent successful organisation. It has to be built up in the factories where they work and in the streets where they live. The aim must be to have a United Front committee in every factory and every street, which will not merely come out in response to Blackshirt demonstrations, but will be in continuous action on the numberless day-to-day issues of the workers' fight.

Pursuing this line, we must develop and encourage the rank and file movement in the Trade Unions, associations of local Labour Parties as in the London and Home Counties' Conference, and United Front movements in the Co-operative Societies. All these are extremely important potential sections of the United Front.

The following points are most important for carrying on the work in the separate organisations, factories and localities :

1. Consistent exposure of the diplomatic and military war preparations of the National Government.
2. All organisations should make clear to the workers that their daily struggles, particularly on health and housing conditions, rents, wages, school feeding, attacks on the Co-operatives, are a vital part of the struggle against Fascism and War.
3. All Labour Party members should support instructions to local Labour Party delegates to move at the next Labour Party Conference for the reversal of the Southport decisions on war and the United Front. Pressure should also be brought to bear on National Trade Union Executives to send delegates to the Conference to support this reversal. To demand the summoning of the Special Trades Union Congress on War as laid down in the Standing Orders of the T.U.C.
4. Protest meetings and demonstrations against renewed Relief Scales and Slave Camps of the Unemployment Act should be organised in every locality with the co-operation of all sections of the working-class movement.
5. Opposition should be organised from every side against the Black Circular issued by the T.U.C., recommending the exclusion of communists and other revolutionary workers from holding posts in their Unions, and against any similar circular that may be issued.
6. Every endeavour should be made to see that the Trade Union delegates appointed to any conference are those who are eager to carry out the wishes of the rank and file, particularly in the fight against Fascism and War.

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7. Localities should be continually on the alert to find out how the Fascists are working, to expose their tactics and prevent their activities by every possible means. All Fascist arguments should be carefully examined in order to combat their effect on workers who may be influenced by them.
8. Continual pressure should be brought to bear on the B.B.C. by resolution and public protest in the Press and otherwise, if possible by an organisation, whenever anti-working-class views are broadcast.
9. Work should be done following on the League of Nations ballot to intensify the fight against all imperialist wars.

It is clear from the above that the work of building the United Front must be done in the existing organisations, factories and localities. If the LABOUR MONTHLY Conference endeavours to set itself up as the representative United Front organisation, it would be taking the United Front campaign off the real road and side-tracking it. A LABOUR MONTHLY Conference, nevertheless, has two valuable and indispensable functions. In the first place, it can work out through exchange of experiences the best form of organisation and policy, the best line of agitation and mass approach and can clarify the issues represented by the United Front against Fascism and War. In the second place, it can act as a focus of campaign, keeping the various bodies in touch with one another and informing an organisation as to what possibility there is of co-ordination with other organisations in a particular district.

The LABOUR MONTHLY should also consider the calling of similar conferences in suitable districts in other parts of the country.

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BOOK REVIEWS

" MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO ! "

Soviet Russia Fights Neurosis Frankwood Williams, M.D. pp. 244 and Index. 1934. Routledge. Price 8s. 6d.

I HAVE read through this book twice with considerable interest. Its general thesis is simple and plain. One would expect fewer mental and psychological troubles in Russia than in the Western world, because the exciting causes of these troubles have been to a large extent " liquidated," to use a Russian expression, and this (according to the author) has been the actual experience in the Soviet Republic. Life in Europe and America from childhood to old age is full of contradictions. " We sentimentalise a great deal about the individual, his potentialities, his sacred person, his freedom, his opportunity—at this point we are thorough idealists—then we turn him loose to devour or be devoured. After he has been thoroughly mauled and beaten up we become realists and in the best realistic fashion examine *him* to find out what is the matter with *him*, that he has got all out of ' adjustment '." In Russia, on the other hand, life is more simple and direct because the individual has a loyalty to a single group and not to many groups with conflicting interests, and the object of each is to contribute to the one undertaking that has meaning to them all. The creed of the Russian may be less exacting than the many creeds of the Western world, but it is easier to understand and follow. " To be sure," says the author, " it is different from what we have known as ' religion,' but it is religion in the sense that it expresses a need deeply felt within man for the security to be found in identifying himself with something larger than himself." And starting from this point the writer proceeds to denounce all orthodox religions. He says that it is religion that produces a sense of guilt and, therefore, another maladjustment, and that it is better to get rid of all the lot together as Russia is said (quite wrongly) to be doing. There are some, myself included, who cannot agree with this, but Dr. Williams makes his case clearly and deliberately and if he had left it at that all would have been well. But to the consternation of the reader he here interpolates a chapter by a Jewish Rabbi in reply to himself, and then returns to the challenge and attempts to make mincemeat of the Rabbi, but in reality leaves the reader hopelessly confused. This is a little unfortunate and is, I think, a mistake. But otherwise the book is well worth reading for it sets out clearly the psychological factors underlying the Russian experiment, and confirms the conclusion of all unbiassed individuals who have studied that experiment, that those who conceived and inaugurated it must have had master minds.

SOMERVILLE HASTINGS.

AN INVIGORATING INTERPRETATION OF THE TWO WORLDS.

Portraits and Pamphlets. Karl Radek. (Wishart, 1935.) pp. 306. 12s. 6d.

THE papers by Radek here collected have a wider range : there are articles on Stalin and other Bolshevik leaders, on phases of Socialist development in Soviet Russia, on capitalist politicians and bourgeois intellectuals. They give a living picture of the whole present situation, experienced with intense energy and expressed in a rich, biting style.

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The spirit of the book is the determined conviction of the correctness of Stalinism and the enthusiasm of Soviet Russia carrying it into practice. This underlying passion and the clarity and exactness of its expression give a peculiarly direct sense of what Soviet Russia is doing to-day.

In contrast to this, there are equally vivid pictures of capitalism in the last stage of loathsome decay: "The capitalist organism of Britain is diseased all over; you are choked by asthma; your Indian stomach and the spinal nerve of Suez are diseased; your nervous system is completely out of order and that is why your Canadian and Australian extremities jerk independent of your conscious will; only your mouth and gullet and belly are as gluttonous as ever, so your hands go reaching out for new food, though they are unable to carry it to the mouth" (p. 205).

It is impossible even to mention all the passages where Radek's description and interpretation of these two worlds invigorates the reader's whole being.

But it must be emphasised that the reason why Radek's book has this effect is that the warmth of his love for Socialism is accompanied by a merciless probing, to use the expression Radek applies to the State prosecutor at the trial of Ramzin, of the secret resistances to the building of Socialism, the secret hopes and wishes for the failure of revolution. His relentless exposure of these wreckers carries him down to the roots of the personalities and tendencies described, and it is this that makes his portraits so living and at the same time enables him to clarify, in passing, questions of pure theory, including such intellectual questions as the meaning of "accident" [a Red Army soldier picked up a packet of papers dropped by a French go-between in a counter-revolutionary organisation. The Frenchman said: "If not for an accident you would not have caught me." Dzerzhinski answered that "if it had not been for the vigilance of an ordinary Red Army ranker the accident of losing the papers would not have done him any harm, that this vigilance of the Red Army man was not an accident at all" (p. 105]. The book is so rich and full because the treatment is always and only in terms of uncompromising Stalinism.

The book is provided with a preface by A. J. Cummings and a series of introductory notes to each paper by Alec Brown, which the writer considers could well have been omitted.

A. W.

A USEFUL STUDY OF THE JEWISH QUESTION.

The Intelligent Man's Guide to Jew-Baiting. George Sacks. (Gollancz, 5s.)

IT is a significant fact that, although British Imperialism has under its heel numerous nationalities and races, whose territories and cultures are ruthlessly plundered and destroyed, English Marxists have seldom applied themselves especially to a theoretical exposition of the National Question, which is of such vital importance to the British working class movement. Apart from various articles by Stalin and by Lenin on the National Question, published in the LABOUR MONTHLY (several of the latter together with others now to be found in book form, *Lenin and Britain*), and a booklet by Rysakoff, very little on the subject has appeared in English.

Particularly to-day is clarity needed on this subject, both because of the growth of Fascism, which uses and fosters racial and national prejudices to further its counter-revolutionary aim; and because lack of clarity is keeping many workers and intellectuals from the revolutionary movement, especially those whose race or nationality is the subject of fierce attack by the imperialists and their agents.

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It is therefore with pleasure that one turns to a book like this, whose author has made a serious attempt to deal with one aspect of this problem that has, with the advent of Fascism, come more into the forefront, the Jewish Problem. Let no one be stopped from reading this book because of its stupid and flippant title, for it is an excellent contribution to a subject that has become, with the formation of a " National Jewish Home " in Palestine under the " protection " of British Imperialism, a matter for deeper study by us.

The author has accepted the Leninist conclusion that only under the dictatorship of the proletariat can the national question be solved, and has applied this to the Jewish Problem.

The Jewish question is not a thing apart from the problems of other minor nationalities under capitalism. On the contrary, it can only be seen correctly when viewed from the same angle. In essence it is a class problem, and can only be solved on the basis of the class struggle. Any attempt to place it outside of society, as a sort of Hegelian Thing-in-itself, as the Bund and many Zionists do (" The Jewish race has always been persecuted, and always will be," " it is the fate of the Jew to be persecuted," this common remark amongst Jewish orthodoxy is being taken up more and more now that pogroms have been put on the order of the day by the ruling class) must be ruthlessly fought against. The Jewish question is used, as all national and religious questions are used by the bourgeoisie, to split the ranks of the working class, and to sidetrack the class struggle into the " safer " channel of racial and religious battles (Jew and Arab in Palestine : Hindoo and Muslim in India, etc., etc.)

> The capitalists, says Lenin, are tireless in their endeavours to stir up enmity between the workers of different faiths, different nations and different races. The rich Jews, like the rich Russians and the rich of all countries, are united in trampling upon, oppressing and dividing the workers.

To look at the Jewish problem from any other point of view is playing into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

Sacks dwells at great length upon the *class nature* of Jewish persecution, and makes an interesting historical survey in order to reveal the intimate connections that exist between attacks upon the Jews and the social unrest and economic crises of the period. Speaking of the pogroms under Feudalism, he says :

> The 14th century, with its social revolutionary struggles, the Jacquerie in France and the Peasants' revolts in England, Germany and Flanders, left its mark on Jewish history. The Black Death had aggravated social and economic discontent, and for this the Jews were blamed—just as to-day there is no conceivable catastrophe in which the anti-semite does not detect the Jewish Hand. Exploitation by the nobles, severity of taxation, filching of the common land, at last roused the peasantry to rebellion, and, as in modern times, there were not wanting astute rulers who could lay the blame on the Jew . . . . for is it not always easier to see the enemy in human form rather than in a system ? (Page 174-175).

At the same time Sacks is careful to point out that it is not only the Jew who suffers during these periods of social and economic struggles, but that

> It should be noted that what appears to us to be unbelievable cruelty was not solely the fate of the Jews. Torture on the rack, death by burning, and destruction of home were the fate of all heretics and Social Revolutionaries,

and who can say, with the full knowledge of events in Germany, Austria and Spain, that this is not as true to-day ?

The question of Jewish culture receives good treatment, the author using with good effect Stalin's speech at the 16th Congress of the C.P.S.U. " Lenin regarded national culture under the domination of the bourgeoisie as a reactionary slogan," says Stalin. " . . . It is bourgeois in its content, and national in its form, the purpose of which is to poison the masses with nationalism and to strengthen

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the domination of the bourgeoisie. What is national culture under the proletarian dictatorship? It is socialist in its content, and national in its form, the purpose of which is to educate the masses in the spirit of internationalism and strengthen the proletarian dictatorship." Using this statement as a basis, Sacks replies very effectively to the Zionists, who state that only in the Jewish National Home (controlled by Jewish and Arab capitalists and landowners, and dominated by British Imperialism) can the Jewish spirit flourish, whilst they bitterly bewail the fact that in Birobidjan the Jewish "soul" is denied because Yiddish is used as the official tongue and not Hebrew. This despite the fact that Yiddish is the language of the proletarian Jew, and that in the ghettos of England and Poland, Hebrew as a daily spoken language is practically unknown, except amongst small sections of Zionists.

Says Sacks:

> Yiddish was spoken by practically 90 per cent. of Russian Jews. I doubt if 10 per cent. could speak Hebrew with any degree of fluency. (P. 201.)

The concluding chapters deal with the methods of the Bolsheviks in solving the National problem within their borders, the author very correctly showing how successfully the Leninist theory is being worked out in practice. (Birobidjan, etc.).

It is in this section of the book that a serious mis-statement occurs. Sacks says that:

> A strong body of opinion within the C.P.S.U. looks with disapproval upon what they call pandering to bourgeois nationalism,

and fails to give the authority from whom he draws so remarkable a statement. He refers to the 16th Congress of the C.P.S.U., but a perusal of this will show that in this Congress Stalin specifically states that opposition scarcely exists, "these deviations (on the national question) are not so noticeable or insistent . . . . they might be called creeping deviations" (*Leninism*, vol. 2, p. 397). Where then does Sacks get his information about "the strong body of opinion, etc."?

H.F.

A LANDMARK OF MARXISM.

The Class Struggles in France (1840-50.) By Karl Marx. (Martin Lawrence.) 159 pp. 3s. 6d. cloth; 2s. paper.

OF the Marxist classics hitherto unavailable[1] to the English reader this is one of the most important. It is, as Engels says, "Marx's first attempt, with the aid of his materialist conception, to explain a section of contemporary history from the given economic situation." Written during the early months of Marx's exile in London, in the autumn and winter of 1849-50, it was first published in the magazine edition of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* issued at Hamburg in 1850.

It is a masterly analysis of the driving forces of revolution and counter-revolution in France. Here Marxism shows itself, even in its first detailed essay, as the supreme method for the understanding of politics and society. The dialectical method of Marx and Engels is able to unravel the very tangled skein of French politics during those eventful years by laying bare the relationship of class forces, by relating political developments to economic changes,

[1] There was an American edition occasionally to be met with in the past; but it was as scarce as it was imperfect.

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to the development of the productive forces in society and their conflict with existing property relationships.

Phenomena that seem hopelessly contradictory to the superficial observer are here resolved. In this connection Marx's treatment of the peasantry and their rôle is outstanding. He shows how their support of Louis Napoleon was not symptomatic of their reactionary temper, but of their hatred of the mortgage-owning, tax-collecting, bourgeois republic. " Behind the emperor," writes Marx, " was hidden the peasant war. The republic that they voted down was the republic of the rich." It is significant that in this early work Marxism, the revolutionary theory and practice of the working class, should contain such an appreciation of the rôle of the peasantry, also stressing the need for the working-class to *lead* the peasantry. This appreciation, developed and extended by Lenin in contradistinction to the notorious Trotskyist dismissal of the peasantry as a " solid reactionary mass," played a key part in the triumph of the Russian Revolution. Incidentally it is in this work that, speaking of the revolutionisation of the peasantry through their actual experience, Marx uses the celebrated phrase: " Revolutions are the locomotives of history."

Emphasis needs to be laid on the fact that in this, one of his earliest major works, Marx clearly sets forth that keystone of his whole teaching—the dictatorship of the proletariat. He describes " revolutionary socialism, communism " as " the declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the inevitable transition to the abolition of class differences generally, to the abolition of all the productive relations on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these productive relations, to the revolutionising of all the ideas that result from these social relations."

At the same time this work propounded the formula by which, as Engels notes, " modern working-class socialism is equally sharply differentiated both from all the different shades of feudal, bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, etc., socialism, and also from the confused community of goods of utopian and spontaneous worker-communism "—namely, the social appropriation of the means of production.

Finally, this edition presents in full Engels' famous Preface to the 1895 edition, with the suppressed passages italicised. The story of the deliberate and fraudulent suppression of those passages by the Social-Democratic leadership, in order to misuse Engels' authority in support of their own anti-revolutionary line, is one that is familiar to LABOUR MONTHLY readers, from R.P.D.'s Notes on " Marxism After Fifty Years " (March 1933), and from his subsequent detailed statement (December 1933).

It is unfortunate that this further invaluable addition to the original literature of Marxism available in English should be marred by errors and imperfections in translation and editing. This is not the first of this essential series of which this is true ; one wonders why those privileged to direct this vital and honourable work do not take their responsibilities more seriously.

G. A. H.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The Study of Prices. Sir W. Layton and G. Crowther. (MacMillan.) 280 pp. 8s. 6d.

Social Credits or Socialism. W. R. Hiskett. Introduction by Dr. H. Dalton. (Gollancz.) 222 pp. 5s.

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